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A

WARNING TO WIVES:

OR,

THE PLATONIC LOVER.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“COUSIN GEOFFREY,” “THE MARRYING MAN,”
“THE MATCH-MAKER,” “THE JILT,” “THE BREACH OF
PROMISE,” AND “THE LIFE OF A BEAUTY.”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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By Mrs. Harriet Maria (Gordon) Smythe

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A WARNING TO WIVES.

CHAPTER I.

Sir Noah and Lady Fathom were a very happy couple. She was a pretty, lively, sparkling creature of nineteen; and though at this early age she had been two years a wife, and one a mother, there was still a good deal of the child about her. She was one of those beings who would always be young at heart; but though her warm affections, her sweet credulity, her playful tenderness, were almost child-like, her quick perception, her ready wit, her faith and her devotion, proved her to be a true woman.

Ada, Lady Fathom had one boy—beautiful in all eyes, but perfect in hers! This cherub child had awakened all the deepest and warmest emotions of her heart, for Ada at seventeen had not chosen for herself—she had married to please her parents, not herself. And yet, while many love-matches had ended in mutual dislike, this *mariage de convenances* had proved so calmly and consistently happy, that when match-making mammas wanted to talk obstinate daughters into unions, which seemed to promise little to young hearts, they always wound up with—“Look at Sir Noah and Lady Fathom, what a happy match!” And is it so?—a moment—and we shall see!

It is the day after Ada’s arrival in London, with her husband and her child—it is her first season in the ‘wondrous City,’ for the last two years have been spent in travelling over half the world. To one of the noblest mansions in Belgrave Square, her husband bears her; and the loveliest object to her mind, in a boudoir furnished with all man’s fancy could devise, or

woman's covet, is the cot shaded with curtains of white muslin and rose silk, where her boy is enjoying the balmy sleep of infancy.

But hark ! while in the fulness of her grateful heart the young mother knelt and wept, a step was heard on the stair—a voice cried, “Ada, Ada ! my sweet love !”—and the husband of that Ada, and the father of that cherub, stood at the door. Is he all “our fancy painted him ?” Is he “lovely and divine ?” Is his a form of manly grace ? a countenance beaming with intellect and love ? dark eyes all soul ? a smile all tenderness ?—is he the finished gentleman, we covet for so thorough-bred a lady as our Ada ? Is he elegant without foppery, and easy without effrontery ? Behold Sir Noah Fathom ! and then say if matches were indeed made in heaven ! Sir Noah Fathom, a baronet of a very ancient family, and a fine estate worth some fifteen thousand a year, *hobbles* up to the beautiful Ada, but with a care (which to our hearts, half redeems that hobble) lest he waken the little sleeping Noah !

Sir Noah Fathom is sixty years of age ; even in youth Sir Noah was little indebted to Nature, or to Art—(often a good hand too at establishing a character for beauty.) Time, who steals from all, the Wealthy and the Poor whatever charm they have, had not spared him ; his hair, once a bonnie red, was red no more, or rather Time had taken away the gold and left the change in silver ; his eyes, never very bright, were now from constant study, weak and red, and protected from the light by a pair of green goggles ! His intellectual but wrinkled forehead was covered by a black velvet cap, worked for him in coloured silks by Lady Fathom. An old dressing-gown and slippers completed his costume ; the large pockets of this dressing-gown were full of fossils, bones, shells, and other curious specimens ; under his arm was a worm-eaten folio. Sir Noah Fathom was the celebrated antiquarian of that name ; and the only instance he had given, through a long life, of faithlessness to the Antique, and desertion of the 'Past,' was when he fell in love with, and proposed

to, that incarnation of youth and bloom, Ada Revel, and made her Lady Fathom. How this came to pass it is our province to relate in due time.

At present we see our Ada, a smile struggling with a tear in her large blue eyes—herself an embodied April rising from her knees—placing her frank hand in her husband's—archly snatching away his treasured folio, and leading him to his infant's cot—and as hand-in-hand they bend together over that blooming bud, a poet might have fancied that Winter in a kindly mood, was smiling on the first-born of Spring.

After gazing a little while, Sir Noah wipes away a very suspicious looking mist from his green spectacles—in doing so, he drops his folio—the little Noah awakes with a start—the mother catches him to her bosom—Sir Noah, out of whose folio a variety of papers and prints have fallen, busies himself in picking them up, muttering to himself in sounds scarcely audible, in consequence of little Noah's alternate crowings,

cooings, and screamings, and his mother's sweet, clear lullaby.

In the midst of this din and tumult, in trips Mrs. Frill, Lady Fathom's own Lady.

“Captain Fitzopal is below, my Lady—Prig has admitted him into the drawing-room, my Lady—won't you please to be drest, my Lady?”

“Adolphus come!” cried Lady Fathom, rosy with surprise and delight. “Noah! Noah! do you hear? Adolphus is come!”

“Well, my love,” said Sir Noah, seated on the floor, and trying vainly to sort his papers—“and who is Adolphus?”

“What have you forgotten Adolphus Fitzopal—the Honorable Captain Adolphus Fitzopal of the hussars—my cousin, love, who was at Revel Court when first you courted me—my sister Fanny's admirer, (he was supposed to be) though I believe that was all fancy?”

“Oh, yes, I remember now—a fine young boy, a studious boy—he used to go on our excursions, and attended my lectures, and seemed apt, and

to like geology—sanguine though, fancying every thing that looked old must be old, a great mistake, for Cuvier——”

“ My dear, he is come.”

“ Well, dearest, then he can go to the British Museum with me.”

“ Please, mem, his man say he have travelled all night ; he heard at Dover your Ladyship was in London, and have flowed to welcome you. What dress will you please to wear ?”

“ Oh, this will do.”

“ But your 'air, ma'am !”

“ Oh, never mind—it is my pet's doing, and I can't take his little rosy hand away, he has got so tight a hold of these curls. Noah, I am going down ; like Cornelia I will say, this is my jewel, here is my ornament ! Come, dear Noah.”

But Sir Noah is again wrapped in thought, and entirely engrossed by a new light which has just broken in upon an old theory ; and seeing this Lady Fathom leaves him where he is, and blushing with delight and pride, her baby's hand still

tightly clutching a handful of her golden ringlets; and his little fat arm round her snowy throat, Ada, as much a girl at heart, as when they parted on her wedding day, two years before, tripped down-stairs, singing to her darling, (who shewed his infant ecstacy in every kind of infantine noise,) and found herself in the presence—not merely of her cousin Adolphus, but of his bosom friend, Major Smiley !

CHAPTER II.

Captain Fitzopal was startled out of a degree of fashionable nonchalance which he had acquired in the —— Hussars, when Lady Fathom, thoughtless of self, entered the room.

Two years had made a great change in both ; but in Ada it was an outward, in Fitzopal an inward change ; two years before she was a slight, blushing, timid girl,

“ So much alarmed, that she was quite alarming ; ”

with long light curls hanging over her face, tall and thin, with a waist you might span, eyes ever averted, pretty features, but a figure of little pro-

mise—very shy in society, but a wild romp with a few intimates. Captain Fitzopal was one of the few ; and such as she was then, he was very fond of his little cousin, but he was very much afraid of Lady Revel, his cousin's mamma ; and so, early discovering that she intended Ada for some one else, and would forbid him the house if she found him in her way, he pretended to be smitten with her sister Fanny ; and as Fanny was only fifteen and had red hair, Lady Revel thought, that some day, if nothing better offered, and he proved to be his uncle's heir, she might consent to his marrying Fanny ; and thus he secured to himself the doubtful and dangerous pleasure of Ada's intimacy, even after she had been terrified by her mother into accepting Sir Noah Fathom.

But if Adolphus Fitzopal had thought her pretty then, he considered her beautiful now. Her hair was of a richer tint, a sunnier hue ; her eyes of a deeper blue, and full of soul and softness ; the rounded proportions of her snowy arms, throat, and bust, were worthy of Juno ; while her

slight waist, her small hands and feet, and her very youthful face, reminded one of Dubœuf's Psyche. She was simple and *naïve* as ever, but she was shy and frightened no more. And while, after the first salutations, Captain Fitzopal tried to conceal his emotions in caressing little Noah on his mother's lap, Major Smiley (a professed connoisseur in Beauty and a licensed Lady-killer) deliberately scanned her features and her form—decided in his own mind that she was beautiful and bewitching—and decided also to keep that opinion to himself.

At length, having quite made up his mind, Major Smiley drew near the group, to ingratiate himself a little with the young mamma, by some notice of her darling, and while little Noah clutched tightly and painfully hold of his well-arranged curls (demolishing in a minute an hour's labour) the Cousins talked merrily on.

“And Fanny is still disengaged?”

“Yes, heart and hand are free, and her hair is

no longer red—it has ripened into a lovely
auburn."

"Then," said Fitzopal, smiling, "I have lost
my chance!"

"How so, Adolphus?"

"You will be angry if I tell you."

"No, not if you tell me true."

"You promise, Ada?"

"Yes."

"Well then, Lady Revel thought, (though unworthy of you,) I might do as a *pis aller* for Fanny, in case nothing better offered and her hair continued red. You frown, Ada; but you promised not to be angry. There was one other stipulation in her Ladyship's mind, and that was my proving to be my uncle Grumbleby's heir, and that seems as doubtful as ever; indeed the last time I asked him for a trifling *loan*, he threatened to marry."

"And he will do it too," quietly observed Major Smiley.

"Marry! why, he is sixty—much too old to marry."

“ He knows you think so, and he bade me tell you, he was too old to put it off any longer. I believe he means to enter the lists against you, and cut you out with Miss Castleton, the great heiress, who is daily expected in London, where, her father’s will, confining his daughter’s choice to three suitors, has made so great a sensation, and excited everybody’s curiosity so much about the Lady herself.”

“ Oh, do tell me all about it,” cried Lady Fathom, forthwith, deeply interested in an arrangement which by limiting the choice of an heiress (probably young and pretty) to three specified individuals, made it almost certain that each prescribed suitor individually, and all the three collectively, would become the objects of her especial and unconquerable aversion. “ What a romance I can already anticipate if the Lady has a particle of sentiment !”

“ Or rather of obstinacy,” sneered Major Smiley.

“ Ah !” laughed Lady Fathom, “ some gentle-

men always call a lady obstinate who has one original idea, one decided opinion, one positive sentiment, in short a——”

“A will of her own——”

“No, I was going to say, a *beau ideal* of her own.”

“I do not doubt,” said the Major, looking with an earnest scrutiny into Ada’s upraised eyes—“that all girls have a *beau ideal* in their own minds; but those who resolve to realize and wed that *beau ideal*, only, find the *beau ideal* dwindle into an *ideal beau*! I have not the honor of knowing Sir Noah Fathom,” he added, in a low and earnest voice, while Captain Fitzopal was engaged in chasing away a wasp from the neighbourhood of Lady Fathom; “but if you, fair Lady, found in him at seventeen the realization of your *beau ideal*, I can only say you are the only woman I know (and I know many, and know them well) who has been so fortunate. I hope you will give me an oppor-

tunity of judging, if to all other perfections you add, what I call a fine taste."

Why did Ada feel her cheeks burn, and her eyes droop, beneath the studied impertinence of this speech? why did she feel more acutely than she ever had done before, that Sir Noah would cut indeed a poor figure as a young girl's *beau ideal*? why did she condescend to reply in an almost apologetical tone?—

"Sir Noah is neither young nor handsome, and therefore he would not realize the *beau ideal* of silly girls, whose heroes must have youth and beauty, if they have nothing else; but"—she added, pausing for a moment, and feeling partly ashamed of her own description of her husband, to a bold and disagreeable coxcomb—"Sir Noah's heart and mind more than realized my *beau ideal*."

"Oh, then I do indeed congratulate you," said Major Smiley, with assumed sincerity and warmth—"and I shall quite long to be introduced to him."

Ada bowed slightly, she did not take the hint;

she still felt disinclined to present her good, kind, quaint old husband to the coldest, most mocking, light grey eyes, and the most sarcastic smile she had ever met with. Turning to Captain Fitzopal, who seemed a little jealous of this long conference, she said: "But come, Adolphus! you have not half satisfied my curiosity—who is Miss Castleton? what was her father? is she young and handsome? and who and what are the three suitors she has to choose from?"

Captain Fitzopal colored up and looked uneasy—Major Smiley said—"Is it possible, Lady Fathom, that you require to be enlightened on all these points?"

"I do indeed."

"Has not Lady Revel written to you about Miss Castleton?" asked Fitzopal.

"She may have done so, if there is anything that at all concerns me, connected with her; but we have travelled home so rapidly, we have had no letters for a month—but what has mamma to do with it?"

Major Smiley was about to reply, but an expressive and almost imploring glance from Captain Fitzopal stopped him. Ada was going with increased interest to repeat her questions, when little Noah, who had been for some time past collecting in his little lap everything he could grasp from a sofa table, within his reach, pulled down upon his head a large bottle of *eau de Cologne*, some of which found its way into his eyes and mouth. He kicked, he screamed, he roared, and would not be comforted!

Ada, alas! the poor mamma! screamed too at first, and then wept over the pain she could not assuage. Adolphus drew near with real anxiety, and Major Smiley sneered at the group. Ada suddenly looked up, and her tearful eyes met this sneer, just as little Noah by rubbing his eyes had renewed his pain and his shrieks. She caught her darling to her bosom, and merely saying, "Excuse me—this must be very annoying to you!"—she hastened away with him.

For some time the gentlemen awaited her

return, but in vain. At length Captain Fitzopal took the liberty of ringing the bell ; a footman answered it, and by him he sent his inquiries after the child, and begged to know if he might have the honour of saying farewell to Lady Fathom.

The man returned with many apologies from his Lady, and an assurance that—"In her child's sufferings she had forgotten their presence, that little Noah was at last free from pain, but having fallen asleep in her arms, she could not risk disturbing him, and therefore must beg them to excuse her!"

"How very provoking," said Fitzopal.

"How idiotic," sneered the Major.

"And she is so much improved ! I think her perfectly lovely!"

"And I," said Smiley, "think nothing at all of her."—(But that is a remark often made by such a man of such a woman, if he feels that henceforth he shall think of nothing else !)

CHAPTER III.

The day after his interview with Lady Fathom, Captain Fitzopal, restless and unsettled in himself, and vexed with his cousin for her unceremonious dismissal of him, rose much earlier than his wont, and roamed into a secluded part of Kensington Gardens.

As he stood leaning against a tree, and feeling out of humour with the whole world, he heard steps in the distance, and presently a sweet female voice singing,

“Meet me by moonlight alone.”

Captain Fitzopal ascertained that the singer was a very pretty, neat looking girl, carrying a

basket and a parcel; and unwilling to be disturbed, he retreated into an arbour close by, from which he could watch the damsel unseen. As she came merrily along, now singing and now talking to herself, a paper parcel she held in her hands burst open, and the contents were scattered on the ground. To the listless Fitzopal, it was some amusement, to watch the girl's consternation, and see her collect her treasures, murmuring to herself the while:—

“Dearee me! Well to be sure! Goodness gracious from Heaven! It’s a bad job, but better than if it had happened in the street—there, as there’s nobody a nigh, I’ll sit down on the grass and rest a bit! What a place London is—there’s none like it for making conquests, and making bargains, the two grand objects of woman’s life! What loves of things in all the shops! and what loves of young men to sell them! how unlike Stubbs! poor Stubbs! Ah, well, I suppose his sufferings is at an end by this time, and if he aint dead, he ought to be! I’ll just take a peep into

my basket, and run my eye over this shop-bill—that I will, if only for the sake of the young feller that put it up so purlily. So ‘SELLING OFF! TREMENDOUS SACRIFICE! PREMISES TO BE CLEARED! GOODS GIVEN AWAY!!!’ Come, come, that’s the shop for me. But Paris kid gloves eight-pence-halfpenny a pair! I’ll try them on! why, what a do! If they haven’t split all to pieces. What an imperent low feller! to go for to sell me sich rubbish! I’ll try another. A nasty, ugly, stoopid—no wonder ‘twas against his rules to let ‘em be tried on! ‘Selling off’ indeed! it’s the buyer is *sold!* What’s ‘given away’ is our money, and in the ‘tremendous sacrifice,’ it’s I’m the victim. I declare I could cry! I’ll fling ‘em in the feller’s face! No, I won’t—I’ll give ‘em to a friend! but I’ve done with bargains, in future I’ll not grudge a good honest price for a good honest article, and that’s a bargain on both sides! They’d just do for Stubbs. Poor Stubbs! *he* loved me! he offered his hand—more than these London chaps do, they only offer their arms!

Heigh ho ! I must be getting home .Fine fellers truly ! not one of those I danced the polker and *cellarows* with last night, is here to meet me to-day, though I gave an 'int of my coming ; while poor Stubbs ! well thinking, never did nobody any *good*—I'll pack up this trumpery and get home!"

While Miss Rose Pink, a Lady's lady, was putting up her purchases with many a pish and pshaw, (as examination disclosed their many blemishes,) a spruce but rather rustic-looking young man, dressed like a valet, appeared in the distance, and changed colour and even staggered, when near enough to examine the features of the busy damsel. He stood for a few moments irresolute, and said to himself :—

" Rose ! I declare, Rose Pink ! false, cruel, perverse Rose ! just the same as ever ! the same notablest, bewitchingest, beautifullest of her sect ! I'll pass her ! I'll cut her ! I'll cut her dead ! for the pride of manhood I will ; but I feels faint, I feels queer ! Oh my ! she looks like a being of a higher spear ! and yet she's sate on

my knee afore this; she seems as made to tread on hair!"

So thinking—for less garrulous than Rose, the young man did not give utterance to his thoughts—he tried to strut past the damsel, who had risen, and was about to hurry home. Rose sees him—sees too that he means to cut her, and passes him with a toss of the head; but, alas! for woman's consistency, she cannot resist one peep over her shoulder! Alas! for the pride of manhood, she caught him looking back! Their glances meet, they smile, they laugh—but tears stood in the eyes of both. It must be so, they meet half way, and cordially shake hands.

"Oh, Rose! oh, Rose Pink!" said the youth with a groan.

"Oh, Stubbs! oh, Roger Stubbs!" said the damsel, with a loud sigh—"whatever brought you to London?"

"The Great Western and a broken heart, Rose."

"And what are you now, Stubbs?"

“ I’m vally to Sir Noah Fathom, Bart.”

At this moment Captain Fitzopal, who had fallen asleep in a corner of the arbour during Rose’s soliloquy, and who was about to depart, resettled himself quietly, and prepared to listen, for any revelations of one of Sir Noah’s household were interesting to him.

“ Only a vally, Stubbs ?” pouted Rose ; “ then you aint your own master yet ?”

“ Aint I though ! Hintelleck for ever, Miss Rose Pink ! I’m very like my own Master and and Master’s master too, Rose—for though Sir Noah has a sight of larning, he don’t keep pace with the times. He aint the ‘ man of his age,’ while I raither thinks I am !”

“ ‘ A man of his age ! ’ pshaw, Stubbs, you’d be no man for my money if you were a man of his age ; but that’s neither here nor there—how is old Stubbs ?”

“ What, Uncle ? as bad as can be—Uncle’s on the go, Rose, and I’m his heir.”

“ Poor dear orphan ! poor Stubby !” said Rose,

coaxingly—"what is he dying at last? then you will be alone in this wale of tears!"

"Yes, Rose, unless you will take pity on me! Come, what objections can you make—look at me, now."

"Well, I do, Stubby! and though I always admired your looks, too much for my own peace, I think you're handsomer than ever—that I do; but what I object to, is them low, wulgar, mean, radikil principles of yours."

"Low, Rose! why them same principles have made France, Young France, what she now is! Look at her."

"Well, I do, I've seen the best of her—I've been in Paris, Stubby, and the more I saw of her, the more I cried, 'Old England for ever.'"

"Old England, Rose, that's gone by! Young England for ever, if *you* please!"

"Young England! what's that, Stubby?"
cried Rose.

"That's me, Rose!" said Stubbs, pompously

drawing himself up—"me, and sich as me—I am Young England. I embody a *principle*!"

"Of no *interest* whatever," laughed Rose.

"You don't mean that, Rose; I am the Young England of the working classes! Listen, Rose, all men is equals."

"And women too, Stubbs."

"No, Rose! I never said that; I am a free-born Briton, and as sich I must adwocate, vote by *bullet* and *universal suffering*; but the laws of Nature made woman Queen, and fixed her throne in every honest heart!"

"Well, that's a sentiment I approves ighly; I'm proud to hear my Stubby speak like a book," said Rose.

"Ah, may be," replied Stubbs, silih, "there's reason for that; some day if you falls in with a paper called Young England, don't you ask no questions, that's all!"

"La, Stubby, you don't say so—well you've ganius, Stubbs, and I've sense, so we ought to make a match of it—if only just to show they

can be united. It's nothing to me what you talks or what you writes, as long as, like other politicians, you don't act up to it. Now you're a Servant, you think all men is equals; but when your Uncle dies, and you keeps servants yourself, Stubby, will you think them low, dirty fellows your equals?"

"Why, as to that, Rose, my own servants, as I orders about, and pays wages too—no, no! indeed! they won't be no more my equals than a Africain from Africa!"

"There's a dear Stubby! I won't deceive you, I'm a tory—I'm for Church and State," said Rose, assuming an aristocratic air.

"Come now," asked Stubbs, "what do you mean by Church and State, Rose?"

"Mean! why I mean I'm for going to Church in State to be sure."

"And so you shall some day, in our own ess and shay. But now just let's take a little walk for the sake of old times"—said Stubbs, with a sigh.

“ No, no,” replied Rose, archly, “ now I must flow away !”

“ Where to ?”

“ Ah, that’s a secret ! can you keep a secret, Stubby ?”

“ It’s as safe with me as with yourself,” replied the lover, slyly.

“ Well, then, at present, I and Missus is incog —and we’re staying at Miss Evergreen’s, a large litterhary boarding-house in Gower Street.”

“ Well, that’s an out-of-the-way, hobsolete plaec—what are you there for ? Why doesn’t such a great hairess as your Missus come and live in the world, nearer we ? Why, Miss Castleton is as rich as Methuselah, isn’t she ?”

“ Yes ! yes ! it aint for want of money we’re fixed there, Stubbs, but I told you we’re incog—I writ you word afore we fell out, about old Master’s will.”

“ I never received the letter.”

“ Lawk, you don’t say so. Well, then, he’ve left her all his immense fortune, but on con-

ditions, and they are, that she marries one of three suitors he has proscribed."

"Three suitors, Rose! enough to turn her head!"

"Three! why with her fortune she might have any young Lunnun batchelor going!"

"No, she mightn't, Rose, for I'm a young Lunnun batchelor going, and she mightn't have me, Rose!"

"Mightn't she, Stubby, dear Stubby! Well, as I was saying about old Master, rich as he died—and he did die as rich as *Ceres*—he'd had his ups and downs, and once in Ingee, long ago, he all but broke; you know he was a great merchant; well, many run him hard, but three friends stuck by him, General Fitzopal, Sir Wildair Revel, and Squire Grumbleby; they clubbed together and set him up again."

"But these three old friends of your old Master, they aint the three suitors surely for your young Missus!"

"Not exactly, though I dare say old Master,

who, between ourselves, was sadly cracked, would have been glad if she'd had no others to choose from, for he hated all mankind except these three; but he did add a crocodile to his will, in which he said if any or all of them were married or dead, their eldest sons were to take their place; and if they had none, she was to live single, or give up to certain hospitals he named, all but five hundred a year!"

"What a parvaise old fellow, Rose!"

"Quite cracked, Stubby, I'm certain sure—well, the father being cracked, the daughter naturally enough turned romantic—it's next kin to being mad—I do believe she was born so, and novel-reading has made her worse—she's all for love, and for being loved for herself alone!"

"Poor thing! and who has she to chuse from?"

"Why General Fitzopal is dead, and Sir Wieldair Revel is *ignited* to another woman—Squire Grumbleby alone remains in *statu quo*—so it turns out that Captain Fitzopal (a young dandy

in the hussars), and Mr. Wildair Revel (Sir Wildair's eldest son—a spendthrift and a scapegrace), are all she has to choose from, unless she is inclined to put up with old Squire Grumbleby. Well, being as I said very romantic, and resolved to be loved for herself alone, she's come to town in disguise. We're just going to leave the Hyde Park Hotel and repair to our future abode, for my young Missus, who has a will of her own, has resolved to do her former governess a good turn, and board with her; there'll be fine plotting I doubt not, with an old maid to help her. And she will contrive to see her three suitors at Miss Evergreen's—Do you wish her joy?"

"Yes, I honors any woman as tries to win the heart she might buy; but what is her disguise?"

"It's not decided on yet—I believe she'll pretend to be a Miss Evergreen too."

"Is she young and pretty?"

"For a brunette of six and twenty, brought up in India, she's pretty well—we're a great contrast, I can tell you, I and Missus, and I think

we sets each other off; but dearee me, how late it is—I must be off—stop, here's a keepsake for you—two pairs of best Paris kids—will you wear them, Stubby?"

"Yes, but only on my heart, they're too precious for anything else."

"Lucky indeed," thought Rose, "that's what they're fit for!"

Stubbs put them carefully into his waistcoat, next his heart—Rose, suppressing a laugh, offered her hand, in token of adieu; Stubbs caught it to his lips. "No, no, Rose, I must see you home as in the dear old times, and hear me swear, divine Rose, I'll go to that '*bower* whence no traveller retires,' if you ever lead to the halter any man but your own Stubby."

Rose laughed, and they departed lovingly arm-in-arm.

When they were out of sight, Captain Fitz-ropal, flushed, excited, and tired with his long concealment, came forth. "After all," thought he, "this tedious morning may be turned to

good account—I'm up to this absurd stage-trick of this romantic damsel, and if I play my cards well, I'm sure of her. Wildair Revel, my old uncle, and a single life, they are my rivals—pshaw, I shall walk over the course! I wish I could drive Ada's haunting face from my thoughts! Smiley thinks nothing of her, why should I? I'll go home, and order my cab, and just call to know how her little squalling brat is, and then I'll drive through Gower Street and find out the literary boarding-house. I declare that Rose Pink is a smart girl, and deserves better than that ass, Stubbs. I've been rather amused by their absurdities and *malaprops*—deucedly bored too, but that one always is, heigh ho!—I'm sick of everything but Ada, and she don't care for me—why should I for her?"

So thinking, Captain Fitzopal lounged home, made an elegant toilet, and ordered his cab.

CHAPTER IV.

“Oh gentle reader, and oh still gentler purchaser,” as Byron said, under our escort you must trust yourself to a spot which you would perhaps be afraid to visit alone—the grand Literary Boarding-house, kept by the Misses Evergreen, for the accommodation of authors of both sexes, and of every branch of literature, the fair hostesses being themselves (in their own opinions at least), no mean specimens of the *genus irritable*.

It was in a pleasant, clean, but somewhat deserted and old-fashioned street, called Gower Street, that the Misses Evergreen had taken for

their novel and, alas ! unpromising speculation, a large and gloomy-looking house.

On the day on which our dear reader and ourselves take, (Asmodeus-like) a peep into the drawing-room, we are so fortunate as to discover at a glance, the two Misses Evergreen. The room is scantily furnished, the floor has no carpet, and the windows are curtainless ! the many styles of the chairs and tables convince us they were picked up hastily at a broker's or at sales, and a dingy air of discomfort prevails, which we do not marvel at, when we remember that the Mistresses of the mansion, are blues ! The Misses Evergreen are tall and rather fine women, of a certain, or rather an uncertain, age. The eldest has wild, restless, black eyes ; a profusion of dishevelled dark hair, with here and there a silver line in its tangled masses, strained off a forehead unfemininely high, but slanting off where reflection (according to phrenology) should have appeared, (under the names of causality and comparison.) Excitement, anxiety, and perhaps

the atmosphere of London, had given a sallow hue to her complexion and a few premature wrinkles to her face ; but tall and stately, with flashing eyes and fine teeth, Miss Evergreen, when judiciously dressed, and polished up for display, was often, if a little flushed, and dressed in the Eastern style, considered by candle-light a fine-looking woman. Her father, who though a gentleman by birth, was a poor hack author by profession, obliged to live by the sweat of a brain never very powerful, had so excited and over-tasked his weak mind, that he died in Bedlam. He had long been more than half 'cracked,' and among other absurdities had caused his two little girls to be christened, Melpomene and Thalia ! Their poor mother, beautiful, clever, and accomplished, (but the destitute orphan of a half-pay officer,) was one of those hard-working, meritorious, but ill-paid and despised beings, known by the name of Daily Governesses. She was a Daily Governess when she refused the hand of a rich tradesman (a widower, whose children she taught).

and declined the proposals of a fat old music-master, about to retire on a competence; and it was shrewdly suspected that these acts of folly and flightiness, (as they were called by her friends) were owing to her prepossession in favour of 'Mad Evergreen,' as he was even then designated —a handsome, wild, aristocratic-looking author, with streaming black hair, rolling black eyes, and collar à la Byron. He proposed to her; and a Daily Governess she, alas! found it necessary to continue, after her imprudent and unpromising love-match: only, that while as a girl her advertisements announced her as a 'Lady whose mornings were devoted to tuition,' she found it necessary when the mother of two children, to add that she had "three or four hours disengaged in the evening which she wished to devote to instruction in French, Italian, music, drawing, history, geography, and the use of the globes." By her means, far more than by poor Evergreen's wild effusions and ill-directed labours, the little household had been kept together in

tolerable comfort; but teaching, is of all occupations the most wearing and exciting to the nerves, and the most trying and exhausting to the lungs; this is probably the reason why the race of governesses is a race of invalids. Of course, there are exceptions, but generally every teacher of any standing, who *really exerts* herself, ultimately suffers severely in her health and spirits. Poor Mrs. Evergreen, devoted to her strange husband, and doating on her little Melpomene and Thalia, did indeed exert herself;—poor creature! she defeated herself. She was laid up with a bad cold, she would arise and return to her laborious duties before she was at all fit to do so. To retain a pupil, who was about to engage another governess, she walked in the snow, one bitter evening from Kentish Town to Hampstead and back; she went to bed very ill that same night, and she never rallied; a galloping consumption closed, as it so often does, the melancholy career of the Daily Governess. To the care of their half bewildered father, the poor

mother (whose death was hastened by the feverish anxiety of her mind) left her two girls, the one twelve, the other fourteen. After her decease, poor Evergreen grew more and more wild in his manner, and outrageous in his writings. It was not long before it became necessary to confine him.

The rich tradesman thought Mrs. Evergreen properly punished for her folly in refusing him, and that her children deserved to suffer, quoting (for he was a Methodist) that scripture which says, the sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children. The old music-master (still a bachelor) did his utmost for the destitute children; he placed them as articled pupils in good schools, and he certainly meant to provide for them, but he had a nervous horror of making a will; he was (as so many of his profession are), a worshipper of the jolly god, and a *bon vivant*; he died intestate, and a cousin he had never seen, a hard, unfeeling man, came in for his whole estate as heir-at-law. The daughters of the 'Mad Ever-

green,' whose childhood had been spent a great deal more with their father the Author, than their mother the Daily Governess, had more taste for their father's idle trade than their mother's laborious profession. Bred up till the ages of twelve and fourteen among books, authors, editors, &c., &c., and having even at that early age tasted the poisonous fruits of flattery for precocious and crude performances, the Misses Evergreen only awaited the expiration of their apprenticeship as articled pupils (of which they had the ill-judged pride to be most heartily ashamed) to embark together in some wild literary speculation, which proved them true daughters of the house of Evergreen. Of course it failed, and for many years they dragged on a miserable existence, sometimes maintaining themselves by the pen, sometimes by teaching. For two or three years Miss Evergreen was head teacher in a finishing school to which Clementina Castleton, the heiress, had been sent from India. The romantic girl formed an attachment for her

strange, enthusiastic preceptress, promised to befriend her, if ever in her power, and kept up an occasional correspondence with her; and what with authorship and teaching, energy and pride, (though full of crotchets, fancies, vanities, and absurdities,) the Misses Evergreen had never quite sunk, when a distant cousin, whose last illness had been cheered by some of their wild compositions and extravagant romances, left them a hundred pounds a piece, and with this sum (which their poverty and inexperience made them consider inexhaustible) they prepared to realize one of the wild projects which had long been floating through their misty brains—namely, that of setting up a grand literary boarding-house, for the reception of authors of both sexes and of all denominations. They were fairly embarked in this improvident and unpromising scheme, when a letter from Miss Castleton announced that she was at once an orphan and sole heiress of her father's immense wealth. The loss of her father, who, though harsh, severe, and very eccentric,

was her only near relation, had deeply affected the enthusiastic daughter, and had caused her a long and severe illness. On her recovery she resolved to go to England, as was arranged for her, in her father's strange will ; and to the great delight of the Evergreens, in this letter, full of warmth of heart and wild romance, she proposed, with her maid Rose Pink, to take up her abode with the Misses Evergreen, and in their house, disguised as a younger sister of theirs, to receive and judge of the character and merits of the three suitors, to whom her father's strange will limited her choice. Now from this romantic freak of the wealthy heiress, the wrong-headed Evergreens, though they certainly hoped for some assistance, did not anticipate half the benefit they often expected from their own wild and absurd speculations. And a proposal, which to two sensible women of the world would perhaps have secured a competence for life, to them seemed principally desirable for the romantic interest and amusement it promised.

But they were the daughters of 'Mad Evergreen,' and of a woman who, with all her excellent qualities, had been romantic enough to prefer 'Mad Evergreen' to a rich tradesman, and a music master who had made a fortune;—and so no time could teach them wisdom—no misfortunes give them experience. Still they had inherited with the faults and follies, some of the good qualities of their parents; they had energy, industry, warm affections, a sort of quixotic devotion, great simplicity and credulity, and a generosity, which in different circumstances would have been amiable, but in theirs was only weak. Miss Evergreen was a tall commanding brunette; Miss Thalia, her equal in height, but much stouter, and having light grey eyes and sandy hair, called herself a '*blonde aux yeux bleux*'; the one, both in her person, her dress, and her compositions, generally affected the sublime—the other, the sprightly.

On this very day they expect Miss Castleton and her maid Rose Pink, but instead of sensibly

busying themselves in making their house comfortable and themselves presentable, in superintending a tolerable dinner, and the airing of sheets, &c. &c.; here they are both in ink-stained wrappers (that once were white) with dishevelled hair and flushed cheeks, engaged in all the absorbing agonies of composition, and scarcely remembering the existence, much less the approach, of Miss Castleton and Rose Pink

CHAPTER V.

It was as we have said the morning of Miss Castleton's expected arrival in Gower Street ; but neither the Misses Evergreen, nor their drawing-room, betrayed any symptoms of preparation. Dingy and dusty was the scantily furnished room. No bouquet smiled on the ink-stained table ; no geraniums or white muslin curtains enlivened the dull windows ; no many-coloured shavings, or gay laurels, (much as the Evergreens loved laurels) no tissue paper cut to emulate lace, concealed the ashes of a departed fire, and the rust on the bars of a once handsome steel grate.

Genuine 'blues' were the Evergreens, and as such they neither knew, nor cared to know, any

of the little contrivances by which, with so little cost but that of ingenuity and taste, Woman can give an air of cheerful elegance to any home, and which might so easily have been imparted to the large and once handsome apartments at “Ever-green House”—for thus had our spinsters named their Literary Boarding-house. One quite longed to call in a brace of char-women, with pails of hot water, scrubbing brushes and soap, to scrub the dingy floor, and revive the handsomely carved wainscoat and cornices—to have the once beautiful rug, dusted, and the torn fringe, in which for months every one’s feet had been caught, mended (a work of five minutes)—to have the ashes raked out and the rusty steel black-leaded—in short, to drive the dingy, dusty London dove of peace from the dark home where he had so long nestled—to turn out the Evergreens’ two little ricketty tables with their large old inky desks. But the Evergreens never thought of these things, while every here and there inkstands of gummy and clotted ink were stuck full of pens that would not write;

and dirty books, and dirtier pamphlets, old magazines, and new proofs met their eyes—all seemed right enough to them. No wonder men—Marrying Men—shun ‘blues’; no wonder the Muses were all old maids, and even Apollo a bachelor. In the *ménage*, one good needle is worth a hundred, aye, a thousand, of the “best ever-pointed pens!”

Behold now! in this comfortless room, the Misses Evergreen, both, as we have said, dishevelled, in slippers, and in wrappers, the one seated in deep thought at her little table, leaning both elbows on her large old desk, her hot and throbbing forehead buried in the palms of her hands, while she is concocting a pun for her comic novel, called “Frolicsome Frank, or the Favourite of Fun.” We need not add that this is Miss Thalia Evergreen. The other Miss Evergreen (Melpomene) is stalking about the room in a fit of poetical excitement, her eye ‘in a fine phrenzy rolling,’ her hands clenched, her lips muttering—at length she exclaims, “It will do,

and I think it will be in time for this week's Hornet after all!" She goes for a moment to her desk and writes a line—then reads:—

"ODE TO THE UNATTAINABLE.

With its wild tenderness my heart o'erflows,
As 'neath its fragrant moisture bends the rose!
On rainbow pinions flies each am'rous wish'—

So, so, as, let's see now, what rhymes to 'wish'? 'Fish,' 'dish,' 'pish.' Fish is the most poetical. Ah! I have it! I have it!" (cries the poetess, wildly pushing back her hair, and approaching her sister) "I have it now:—

'On rainbow pinions flies each am'rous wish,
As thro' the dazzling waters, darts the fish!'

That's it, capital! Thalia, Thalia, do come and hear this.

'As thro' the dazzling water darts the fish'—

Come, dear!"

"La, sister, how provoking! You've disturbed me just as I was getting out of a difficulty which kept me awake all night, and has tor-

mented me all day. I had just decided that Frolicsome Frank, is to turn out to be the son of Lord Flirtwell; but it is such a labour to bring it about, I declare I'm quite exhausted."

"Nonsense, Thalia!" replied Miss Evergreen, much nettled—"what is the fatigue of writing an ephemeral novel, compared to the really terrific excitement and overwhelming labour of poetry like mine. Then to be sure a novel (even if successful) is only the 'Comet of a season,' while a fine poem is a fixed star in the literary firmament!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed, with a bitter laugh, the fair Thalia—"go on then, sister, I beg, with your dull twinkling star, and leave me to launch my dazzling comet."

"Dazzling!" retorted Melpomene, with a sneer, "why you know, dear, you've never written anything that has had the least success!"

"No success!" retorted Thalia with a scream—"no success, dear! why, what do you call Spight's review in the Hornet, of my "Merry Andrew, or Ask Mamma?"

“What do I call it, dear? why censure in disguise, love.”

“Nay, I cannot bear this, sister,” cried Thalia, darting forward with her MS. “Melpomene, beware! such envy and venom injure you far more than they do me; they corrode that best blessing, your kind heart, and they alienate your only treasure, a fond sister! Your poems are fine, truly fine! I am above denying their genius—I glory in it; but if success were the criterion to judge by, where is your merit? Whoever of all the publishers you have applied to, who ever ran any risk to publish your ‘Passionate Ponderings,’ while Sneer and Jeer did take my ‘Merry Andrew, or Ask Mamma’ on half profits, dear.”

“Which you found, dear, to be whole loss!”

“And a fine thing that for a sister to exult in! Oh, Melpomene! why should the labours that improve the head, ruin the heart? Can you really triumph that I should have coined my brain into puns and quibbles, for six months forcing mirth and merriment out of an aching

head and a sinking heart, not knowing an hour's happy carelessness, or a night's refreshing rest, and all to be tricked by Jeer and Snee^r out of the slightest remuneration for so much labour, when I know that the work *was* a success, even in their own sordid sense of the word ; for every review proclaimed it "the best novel of the season," and every advertisement announced it "as now ready at every library in the United Kingdom."

"Thalia ! you are right," said Melpomene, in tears ; "but if it was unkind in me to reproach you with that loss which of course added to the vile gains of Jeer and Snee^r ; it was not very sisterly in you to taunt me with what is not the want of merit in my poetry, but of taste in the public ! but come, sister, the truth is we are of the *genus irritabile*. Our brains are on fire. The thirst for praise (proof of the fever of the soul) consumes us. Would that we had been bred up in the first instance to some humbler trade. "The needle is mightier than the pen." However, even Mc. Peevish and Spight own we have

genius, though they enviously add, we want judgment, skill, and taste; but we know why they say that. However, since even they own we have genius, we may be sure the public will some day find it out. Come, let us be friends."

"Oh, my Melpomene!" cried Thalia, "let me clasp you to my soul."

"Sweet enthusiast!" replied the elder sister, embracing her. "My Thalia! it is our fate to tread in the steps of our poor father. Why, we were reared among the old folios on witchcraft and magic, from which he compiled his modern treatises on Magnetism and Mesmerism. The first words we heard were 'copy' and 'proofs'; penny-a-line men dandled us in their arms, and printers' devils rocked our cradles!"

"True, sister," sportively replied Thalia; "we were born of the pen, the experience we have had of the disgraceful drudgery of teaching, and our poor mother's early fate, warn us that by the pen we must live. Alas! even this our great hope, our long projected scheme, our most promising

speculation—this literary boarding-house—alas ! it does not answer !”

“ Ah, no,” replied Miss Evergreen with a deep sigh, “ it does not indeed ; we overlooked the fact, that authors are neither ‘ monied men,’ nor ‘ marrying men ! ’ They pour in fast enough themselves, but not so their money !”

“ Too true,” sighed Thalia ; “ Cribb owes six months’ board, and Mc. Peevish and Fitzplagiar three.”

“ Exactly, they all owe for the whole time they have been here. And one cannot remind them— one cannot even hint that one wants a little money !”

“ No, no, it would be beneath an Evergreen ; but I see we shall fail because we cannot learn to be sordid. Spight must be well off, for see how the Sunday Hornet sells ! And Fitzplagiar and Mc. Peevish, though they have made nothing by their writings, left, the one a good business, and the other a lucrative office, where they had saved money—left them by Spight’s advice to devote

themselves to literature. But for those conceited Miss Twaddles, who were off directly their stupid novel succeeded, and could not leave without paying, I should not have a penny to go on with. True, that poor young fellow Luckless pays regularly for his back garret, but what is five shillings a week? And now he has quarrelled with Spight, he will be no longer on the Hornet, and will have nothing to live on. Poor creature! I believe he lives chiefly as it is on bread and water; however he has paid regularly hitherto, and he is so reserved and so odd one cannot tell what to make of him."

"He refused twice that I asked him to dine with us," said Miss Evergreen.

"Yes, I fancy he has no decent coat to appear in; however, it was well he did refuse, for Spight hates the sight of him, and we must not offend Spight, sister!" said Thalia, archly.

"No, indeed, he is our best friend, and mainly instrumental in getting Clementina to come to us. When he was Elocution Master at that odious

‘Lancaster House,’ where I was Head Teacher, (to my shame and disgrace) he, dear Spight, got a great influence over Clementina Castleton ; he has corresponded with her ever since she has been in India, and I think he first suggested her coming to us. He, too, is to bring her three suitors here—you know he is full of plots.”

“ Exactly ! well I hope something will turn up at last. It would be strange indeed if we made more of Clementina’s project than of any of our own ; but really a house full of authors is a house full of plagues. What I once thought would be so congenial and so profitable, I find so irritating and ruinous—they are all so proud, so poor, so jealous, so quarrelsome ! pay so ill, and expect to live so well ! If they fail, they are unbearable—if they succeed, they are more unbearable still. The Miss Twaddles no sooner got a hundred pounds for their idiotic ‘Triumphs of Ton,’ than they picked a quarrel with me about the dinners, and were off. Then poor Cribb, ever since his MS. was returned, has kept his bed, and has to

be waited on ; and old Mrs. Fungus, ever since those attacks on her ‘Woman in the Ascendant, or the Tables Turned at last,’ in ‘The Probe,’ ‘The Viper,’ ‘The Balance,’ and the ‘Boudoir,’ has required to be watched, and have her pen-knife and scissors hidden up. But hush, Thalia, was not that a double knock ? While we are chatting here, we have quite forgotten that Clementina comes this very morning.”

“ She is come ! ” cried Thalia, looking from the window—“ and only in a hackney coach ! ”

“ Oh, of course she is incog ! A smart damsel with her, her maid of course, and such a quantity of luggage ! Ah, there she is, paying the coachman a handful of money, thrice his fare, I can see by his bow ! Just like her at Lancaster House ; she used to give away all she had, and now with her wealth I dare say she is generous as ever ! —I wish we were drest ; but she knows we are children of the Muse ! The room does not look very tidy, but it will do—none but little minds care for trifles. What are chairs, tables,

carpets, curtains compared to sympathy, eloquence, sentiment? what is a grand repast, to the 'feast of reason and the flow of soul'?"

"True," said Miss Evergreen—"and that we *can* provide her; but hark! I hear her light step, her merry laugh—she comes, the dear girl comes! I must rush to meet her."

And Miss Evergreen, in her wild attire, threw open the drawing-room door, and caught in her arms the light figure of Clementina Castleton, whose black eyes laughed out in spite of the restraint imposed on her rosy lips, by kind feeling and good breeding. But it was difficult to behold the two 'true blues' with their wild attire and wilder manner, and suppress a laugh. Clementina did suppress it, for which we give her great credit; but to a more minute description of this important and interesting personage, we must devote another chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

Clementina Castleton was born in India. Her father was an Englishman of good descent ; the origin of her mother was involved in some obscurity ; but the cast of features, the black eyes, and lithe figure of the pretty Clementina convinced all connoisseurs that that mother was at least in some degree of "the land of the East and the clime of the sun." She had died in youth herself, and in her daughter's earliest infancy, and all questions about her were early forbidden to the little orphan.

At eight years old Clementina was sent to England for the benefit of her education and her health. At Lancaster House the young Indian

heiress grew from a sallow, large-eyed, rather meagre child, into a beautiful specimen of that style which some consider the *beau ideal* of womanly beauty. The bracing air of our island, the regular habits, the exercise and the plain diet of a first-rate English school, lent the softest of English rose-tints to the clear olive of a beautiful cheek ; and lips of the softest red, set off teeth which were indeed like strings of orient pearl ; the hair of a blue black, grew glossy and redundant, the light pliant figure was rounded into perfect symmetry, and in her own peculiar style Clementina became lovely. Still in the shape of her head, the cast of her features, even in the peculiar black of her eyes, you could trace her Eastern origin, and to some tastes the most common-place English girl, with blue eyes, yellow hair, and a red and white complexion, was lovelier than Clementina. But to a poetical and unprejudiced eye, Clementina, in her best moments, (for she was very *journalière*) realized one's conception of Byron's Zuleika, or Moore's Nourmabal.

In temper and disposition our heiress had much of the Anglo-Indian in her composition. She was at once indolent and energetic—frolicsome, and yet feeling—passionate, and yet placable—lavishly generous in some instances, yet strangely inconsiderate in others—credulous and confiding; and yet with a sort of transparent cunning which made her fond of manœuvring—ever extreme in love or hate; defiance and distrust would rouse her to deeds of violence and wrath; but a gentle word, a silent tear, a sigh from a wounded heart, would convert the little Indian Queen into a kneeling, weeping slave.

Nature had given her many and varied talents, but little industry to bring them to perfection. Her perceptions were keen and rapid, but she reflected little; all her impulses were kindly and noble, but her principles (except those broadly defined ones, without which no Christian woman deserves the name) required to be strengthened indeed! This sketch will perhaps suffice to show how much of what is really good was to be found

in this fair and flighty girl, or rather woman, for she was six-and-twenty, and to this age had her father's will, and her own romantic fastidiousness, kept her single. Rose Pink was, however, guilty either of an error in judgment or in sincerity, when she hinted to Stubbs, that India and a dark complexion made Miss Castleton look old for her years. Few who saw her, with so soft a bloom, eyes so darkly brilliant, and a form so light and round, would have believed that she had escaped her teens.

After her first struggle with a keen sense of the ridiculous, at the appearance of the two True Blues, who looked in truth sad scare-crows, Clementina felt the tears rush to her eyes, for though ten years had somewhat altered the Evergreens, yet their features and their voices, and above all their ardent embraces, recalled the last time she had seen them. Then, she was going—a happy, hoping, but penniless girl of sixteen—to India and her father; now she returned at six-and-twenty, wealthy beyond her own powers

of comprehension, but with the weight of ten years on her heart, fatherless and alone!

The Evergreens, who believed her emotion proceeded entirely from the rapture of seeing them again, and the touching thought of their sufferings (perhaps legible on their faces), wept aloud; (tears flow so readily when the fountain is 'self.' If people even allude to their own death they are in tears directly.) Clementina soon dashed away her few natural tears, like Eve—and still more like Eve, the Evergreens wiped theirs with their hair. True Blues are generally better provided with tears than with handkerchiefs.

"Come, come!" said Clementina, a bright smile breaking over her April face—"we parted in tears, let us meet with smiles. My dear, dear Evergreens, how do you do?" she added, affectionately taking a hand of each, "but I need not ask—you, I see, are flourishing as ever—Evergreens indeed!"

"Darling girl!" cried Miss Evergreen, "welcome to our humble but literary roof."

"Sweetest!" asked Miss Thalia, "when did you arrive in town? did you post from Dover in your own carriage?"

"Not I indeed! Why should I be dragged along by jaded posters, when the poorest ride the elements now?"

"The same independent, original creature as ever!" said Thalia.

"Posters indeed!" retorted Clementina, "Fire and Water were the steeds harnessed to the car that brought me. We sped along the shining rails, a flying world—earth groaned in envy—the steam hissed defiance—the merry sparks danced along the way like elfin sprites——"

"Capital! go on, dear!"

"Town, hill, and valley seemed to be flying past us; a blessing on those daring spirits who have indeed "put a girdle round about the earth!" Suspense is robbed of half its power—Affection now has wings—and young ladies longing for London, with a wish are in its dear, delightful streets!....These, my Evergreens, these are

my first impressions of my first railway trip. What say you, are they worthy of being set in a note-book, learned and conned by rote, and introduced into one of your works? I think they would do better for Thalia than Melpomene—suit ‘Frolicsome Frank, or the Favourite of Fun’ better than ‘Passionate Musings,’ or ‘Weep, Woman, Weep.’”

“I could work them into ‘Frolicsome Frank,’ ” said Thalia.

“Nay,” retorted Miss Evergreen “some of the ideas would do for my ‘Passionate Musings.’ ”

“Well,” laughed Clementina, “I have plenty more at your service; but now for the romance of reality—what think you of my plot?”

“Capital!” said Thalia.

“Exquisite!” cried Miss Evergreen. “But will you have no difficulty with guardians or trustees, love?”

“Oh, no, I am tolerably independent of them, and being more than of age, they imagine, I suppose, that I am come to years of discretion.

Indeed, when they heard I wished to reside with my quondam preceptress and her discreet sister, they looked upon me as a paragon of prudence and propriety."

"Admirable!" cried Thalia; "but with regard to the past——"

"Most judicious," said Miss Evergreen; "but as Thalia was about to observe, though dire necessity compelled us to demean ourselves and degrade our gentle and literary blood, by the drudgery of teaching, you well know we were always ashamed, bitterly ashamed, of that degradation, and we must implore you, dearest Clementina, never to allude to those days of grovelling, and stipendiary anguish; and in this request I must include our mutual friend, Devereux Spight, who was equally degraded in his opinion as Elocution Master, and equally ashamed of that blot on his escutcheon."

Miss Castleford smiled, but said, "Trust me I will be discreet; I shall at least, my dear Evergreens, escape the lot of most heiresses, that of

being sacrificed blindfold at the shrine of my own golden calf."

" You will indeed, my love, and by this admirable device you will be the Priestess instead of the Victim of the altar, and I doubt not you will have the pleasure of winning at least one heart with no assistance from the golden halo, wealth throws round the fairest, as round the plainest face. But we have been conning over your plot, love, and Thalia has suggested a little improvement, namely, that you should pass, not as our sister, but our niece Inez Mc. Alpine. Our father had a sister who settled in Spain—this will account for those jetty eyes, those raven locks, and the clear olive of that lovely skin; so, Inez, you are henceforth my poor niece, and protégée—a literary débutante, too—and in this disguise you are to see your three wooers here. Mr. Spight has undertaken to bring this about, and he never fails in anything he undertakes—dear, dear creature!"

" Nothing can be better," said Clementina;

"I shall thus see them as they are, for they will not assume a disguise by which they can hope for nothing. Perhaps I shall even hear them speculating on their chance of the heiress, and see them make sure of winning her, just as she has inwardly vowed rather to die an old maid."

"It is a clever scheme, indeed," said Thalia. "Was it entirely your own idea? did no one else suggest any of the details?"

"My own heart first prompted it, dear Evergreen; but I must own it was moulded into shape by our mutual friend, Mr. Spight. Perhaps you do not know that ever since I left 'Lancaster House,' I have corresponded with him; he has directed my studies. And from being my elocution master (oh, I forgot, that is a forbidden theme) is become my friend. Is it not kind of him to take this interest in me—now, too, that I hear he is quite the lion of the literary world. I wonder where he is, I want to write to him. I suppose if I direct to the Hornet Office——"

“ No, no, no ! are you not aware that he lives here ?”

“ Here ?”

“ Yes, here !”

“ And where do his two friends live, Mr. Peevish and Mr. Plagiar, who he told me had helped him to form this plot, and must be admitted to my confidence ?”

“ They, too, form part of this establishment.”

“ Delightful ! what fun it will be.”

“ But let me see, who are the three prescribed suitors ?”

“ I will tell you,” laughed the lively Clementina, reckoning them on her taper and rose-tipped fingers—one, two, three—old Grumbleby, young Wildair Revel, and Captain Fitzopal of the — hussars.”

“ A poor and limited choice,” said Miss Evergreen ; “ two young scapegraces and one old curmudgeon !”

“ I should only have had three old curmud-geons to choose from had poor papa had his way

—old Grumbleby, old Sir Wildair Revel, and old General Fitzopal?"

"How so, dearest?"

"Why, when poor papa broke, these three united to set him up again; in reward for which I was left as a reversion between them; for the last twenty-five years, you know, he kept up no intercourse with any one, and in that time Sir Wildair and the General got married, and the latter died; their interest in me goes to their sons, but old Grumbleby claims in his own right. If I marry none of them, and live single, well, but if I marry any one else, I lose all but five hundred a year."

"Oh, shocking! not to be thought of! tell me what are they really?—can you select one tolerable husband from among them?"

"From all I can learn," said Clementina, "old Grumbleby is a vain old Moralist, wise in maxim, but silly in conduct. Young Revel is a wild scapegrace, who not being able to manage himself, cannot possibly be expected to manage a

wife and a fortune. I hear he is rusticated, for some follies at Oxford, disinherited by his father, (who will probably relent when he knows the chance he has of a prize in the matrimonial lottery); and I fancy he is somewhere abroad, living on his wits, which have not been able to keep him more than half alive. The last, Captain Fitzopal of the Hussars——”

“ You name him last, sweet Clem, or rather Inez, by which I see you rate him first.”

“ Why, what can I hope from an old squire and a young collegian ?”

“ Have you seen them ?”

“ No.”

“ And the Captain ?——”

“ Oh, no, no—yes—no, not exactly,” said Clementina, blushing and hesitating, and finally bursting into a fit of laughter. “ My dear Evergreens, I am a poor dissembler ; the fact is I *have* seen him, but only for a few moments, by chance, and unseen by him. He drove up to the door of the Hyde Park Hotel, while I was looking

from my window; I watched while he exchanged a few words with some gay friend on a balcony in the next room. I asked his name, and heard who it was; and to be candid, if he is all his looks, his delightful voice, and engaging manners, proclaim him, why then old Gregory Grumbleby and young Wildair Revel, I am your humble servant to command, but not to be commanded."

"But, dearest! should he prove the wild, dissipated creature the world calls him——"

"The world is ever wrong, harsh, unjust; but even then, he might be saved by love!" sighed Clementina.

"Forgive me!" said Thalia; "but should he not heed a Clementina Castleton's charms in the form of poor Inez—what then?"

"Why, then, I'll marry his uncle, old Grumbleby, for spite, and now I must go!—let Rose Pink into my new disguise as Inez Mc. Alpine, and make a toilette suitable to the poor protégée, the unfortunate débutante. Let me see," glanc-

ing archly at the Evergreens "white wrappers spotted with ink, hair dishevelled—"

"No, no, no, you wild romp!" laughed the Evergreens; "braided hair, a neat white muslin, and a black silk apron—no authoress begins with the wrapper."

"That," laughed Clementina, "is the privilege of confirmed authorship—deep, deep blue—I do not envy and shall not imitate it—*au revoir!*"

So saying, Clementina, or as we must henceforth call her, Inex, tripped away, followed by Thalia. Miss Evergreen remained behind, for she fancied she heard at the street door, a knock she knew and loved. Hastily arranging her wrapper and shaking her locks, if possible, into "more admired confusion"—"Poor deluded girl!" she exclaimed (for Miss Evergreen was much given to soliloquy) "she fancies she is going to give these three suitors a fair trial, when her heart has already returned a verdict in the Captain's favour. Ah, the heart is a tyrant indeed! How long Spight is in coming up, and here I declare

is Thalia back again; never can I get a few minutes tête-a-tête with my too fascinating friend. He comes! be still, poor flutterer! Oh, woman's heart!"

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Devereux Spight, editor of the *Hornet*, and author of several sarcastic novels, plays, and poems, entered the drawing-room at one door, just as Thalia Evergreen tripped in at the other, having left the heiress in her own room and with her own maid, Rose Pink, engaged in adapting to her pretty figure, a costume suitable to the humble protégée niece of the *Misses Evergreen*.

Mr. Devereux Spight was a rather small, slight, and sallow-looking man of about eight-and-thirty, scrupulously neat in his person and attire. He always wore a suit of black, of the finest texture

and most admirable fit ; and his cravat, linen, and waistcoat were so white, that one wondered how a London washer-woman could effect such a triumph, or how it could survive one walk through the streets of London, or one hour in the Hornet office.

Dr. Johnson has said, that he could not be five minutes under a porch, taking shelter from a storm, with a man of genius, without detecting him as such ; and it is certain that those houses of clay, where talent takes up her abode, are generally so lighted from within, that we instantly recognise her presence. The eyes of a man of genius generally betray him. The mouth too, whether handsome or not, generally has a refinement peculiar to talent ; and the whole air, manner, voice, and deportment, strike us as peculiar.

These remarks apply particularly to Mr. Devereux Spight ; he was not a very agreeable person to look at, but he was a very arresting one. His forehead and eyes were so large as to be out of proportion with his other small but aristocratic

features ; premature baldness too, gave an unnatural height to his head, which, though bare on the top, and white and glistening as a new-born mushroom, was surrounded by a thick, close curling frill of black hair, and whiskers to match surrounded a pointed chin, (a very little underhung.) His delicate aquiline nose, short upper lip, and small sarcastic mouth, with its beautiful little sparkling teeth, were certainly handsome, but of a beauty which gave no pleasure, at least to the generality of beholders. To a woman who loved him, he would perhaps have appeared incomparably handsome ; but I can fancy that to one who did not, and whom he chose to woo, he might seem almost fiend-like. His searching, restless eyes were so black, so deep, and there was sometimes such venom in his smile ! His hands were so small, so white, and with such beautiful nails, so scrupulously kept, that few ladies could rival him in this particular ; and his small arched feet were worthy of those hands.

Such was Devereux Spight, the natural son of

an unnatural father. His parents were a nobleman and a milliner's apprentice ! His childhood had been spent in excessive poverty. His father, a spendthrift and a profligate, retired to the continent before his son saw the light, and forgot even that he was expected ; and his mother, hard working and miserable, made him the bearer at once of her sorrows and her band-boxes. In the close and miserable room, where Mrs. Spight made, for a mere trifle, dresses that Mesdames Marabout and Satinette charged a frightful price for, little Devereux Spight passed the first impressionable (and therefore invaluable years) of his life, amid an odious litter of snippings, patterns, threads, cuttings of ribbon, lace, silk, muslin, velvet, scissors, pins, and needles. A frightful contrast between their own abject poverty and the lavish wealth of others, was presented by the rich silks, satins, and velvets which covered the poor bed of Mrs. Spight and her little boy. While carefully pinned up against a white sheet, hung over a clothes-horse, were the effigies of a bride,

all white satin, Brussels lace, and orange flowers, with a whole train of bridesmaids, in blue or rose *moiré*, who seemed to preside at the miserable little ricketty tea-table, where from a black tea-pot, with a broken spout, came a dark infusion which no milk made palatable, while in a broken tea-cup, the darkest sugar melted in unison with a saucer of salt butter, and a lump of dark-looking, untempting bread; while a red herring or two made up the sempstress's dearly loved 'tea.' There, bonnets for right honourable heads contrasted their *fraicheur* with the beggary round; and boxes of artificial flowers and gay ribbons early infused into the little Devereux's mind, a love of the gay and showy, with the bitterness of envy and the venom of discontent.

His mother's *faux pas*, too well known to be hushed up (as such things often are,) had been taken advantage of by Mesdames Marabout and Satinette, to drive her from their establishment, and make her solely dependent on them for the means of subsistence. They knew full well that

they had no other hand so valuable, no one in their showy establishment who for taste or skill could compete at all with Miss Melissa Spight. The year which gave birth to the little Devereux—so named after the family of his noble and ignoble, honourable and dishonourable papa—was the very year in which Miss Melissa Spight was to have passed from the oldest and most accomplished apprentice at Madame Marabout's, into that great personage's fore-woman, with board, lodging, and eighty pounds a year!

To establish their own characters for propriety, and to compass their own ends, Mesdames Marabout and Satinette publicly and ignominiously dismissed the miserable and friendless Melissa, who, the very day she received her congée (after seven years hard work, and a hundred pounds paid as premium by parents then no more) heard that her lordly seducer had escaped to the Continent, to avoid the impertinence of his duns, and the resentment of a family, one of whose members he had beguiled with a

promise of marriage. Melissa was a girl of deep and violent feelings (clever people generally are); she had loved this profligate nobleman with a weak, a guilty, an absorbing, but a first and passionate love. Melissa resolved to die; she hid herself and her shame in a garret in a back street. She took, (what she believed to be, a powerful poison), and throwing herself on a wretched flock bed, of which the dingy blankets filled her with disgust, she awaited Death.

But her employers had watched her; they had guessed her purpose when they saw her hovering about a chemist's shop close by; they had imparted their suspicions, and caused the shopman to administer an innocent medicine in the place of the deadly drug Melissa sought. They ascertained her retreat, and resolved to bide their time.

Poor Melissa! the drug she had taken, acted of course on her imagination—chiefly—the first hour that she spent awaiting its effect was horrible, but those that succeeded it were still

more so. At length her suspense became unbearable—Conscience began to torture and to terrify her—the room seemed full of phantoms of death and horror. Wild with dread, she sprang from her bed; bodily pains began to rack her, and acute tortures, of which she had had no conception, rent her delicate frame. Her cries brought her landlady to her assistance; she suspected the truth, which the inexperienced girl had not even guessed at.

“It must be death,” cried Melissa, while the coarse woman, laughing, said: “It’s more like birth; but we’ll soon have the parish doctor here.”

And in the midst of her cries, her groans, and her despair, a boy was born! That boy was Devereux. His mother’s terrors had hastened his appearance in this world of care; but that wretched mother had a mother’s instincts, and she now felt bound to life and to her boy.

Soon came privately, and as if dreading contagion to her spotless fame, Madame Marabout,

and with her a *bonne*, who brought some necessaries and some comforts. Madame kept down her veil, as if afraid of being recognised, and gathered up her dress, as if the very floor would soil it. She spoke pompously of *l'opinion publique*, *la morale*, *ces demoiselles*, *l'exemple*, *le monde*—said the eyes of *l'Europe entière* were on her establishment, but that while Society required her to make a public example, her heart would never allow her in private to desert her *chère petite*, her *pauvre infortunée*, *victime de la perfidie d'un vil séducteur*, *qui, bien qu'un milor s'était conduit dans une affaire aussi délicate, comme le dernier des hommes !*

Degraded, humbled, and forsaken by all the world—despised and rejected by the relations she applied to—poor Melissa clung even to Madame Marabout, and before her strength was restored, gladly accepted at her hands, employment at the lowest rate of profit. Yes, Melissa, a first-rate milliner, who but for this sad event would have been Madame's forewoman, was glad to work for

the same wages as those earned by a common sempstress.

Melissa continued to inhabit, with her little Devereux, the same room in which he was born. Sempresses, poorer and more miserable even than his mother, (for they came to help her and to work under her guidance, for what she could afford to pay them), were the boy's only acquaintances; their vain, silly, envious jabber, (for it did not deserve the name of conversation) early poisoned his mind; their low intrigues, their vile confidences, their petty calumnies, and their atrocious lies, early sunk through his quick ears into his plotting heart, as he played amid snippings and cuttings on the carpetless floor. Mischiefous and spiteful, his first intrigues consisted in carrying off the large bright "cutters out," hiding needles, and entangling skeins of silk and thread. (And here we must pause to remark one redeeming point in these depredations, and that was, that they were generally intended to benefit his mamma—at least that the "cutters out" and

needles were always conveyed to her pockets, and her skeins of silk and thread always spared.) The workwomen's perpetual and ever recurring repast of tea, with which they kept their aching heads awake and their weary eyes open, (unwholesome even for themselves, was doubly so for him), and early excited his nerves to irritability, and robbed his cheek of all childish roundness and bloom.

Naturally very quick and inquiring, the little Devereux, with very little help, taught himself to read out of the "Ladies' Magazines," "Museums," "The Modes de Paris," "Le Follet des Dames," and other publications in which the outward finery seems substantial, compared to the literary offerings; so that the adornment for the outside of the head, though of gauze and gossamer, seems far less ephemeral than the essays and the sonnets destined for its inside. Still these were things in print, and something to read, and he read them, and thence crept on to novels, let out at a penny a volume, and Sunday

emporiums of ribaldry and slander. This, with a few songs and ballads, taught him by his mother, who added a slight knowledge of writing and summing, to his stock of knowledge, formed his education; except that the poor woman having among her assistants a very inexperienced and inefficient French girl, who had taken refuge from the miseries of a wretched English school, where she was French teacher, as worker for Mrs. Spight—that person continued to employ her, on condition that she atoned for her bad management of her needle, by imparting her language to Master Spight, an immense advantage to him in after life, as most knowledge proves to be.

As soon as he was old enough to go alone in the streets, Devereux, (remarkably small, but equally shrewd) trotted along, bearing large band-boxes and wicker baskets covered with black oil-skin; but ere long he formed acquaintances who set him against the drudgery of being useful, and as some of them earned a few shillings a

week as chorus boys, &c. &c., at the theatres, Devereux resolved to try his fortune in that line.

For some days, Devereux, then twelve years old, was missing, and his mother was frantic. At length he was discovered and brought home. “Where have you been?” sobbed his mother!

For some time he would not tell; at length, when ordered to take a basket and a bandbox to Madame Marabout’s, Devereux, his eyes on fire, exclaimed: “No, I have done with that for ever—know that I am become an actor!”

“An actor!” exclaimed the mother.

“An actor!” cried her attendant sempstresses.

“Yes, sometimes I’m a soldier and sometimes I’m a devil—and I’ll always be either the one or the other.”

And it was true, for they had Gulliver’s Travels as a pantomime at one of the theatres, where some *diablerie* was also represented—In troops of Lilliputian soldiers, or of fiends; Devereux made one in the chorus, and by degrees he rose to perform some juvenile parts that required more talent, and

received a higher remuneration. But in time Devereux Spight grew too big for childish parts, and neither his voice nor his figure were suited for adult characters; but he had acquired a good deal of experience, and what is vulgarly called knack and knowledge of the stage, and he soon earned a tolerable livelihood by adapting and translating farces, for he had formed some intimacies with French actors, and had picked up a good deal of their language—grammatically too—from Mademoiselle Eglantine de Beaumont, his mother's inefficient assistant, but his own competent and well-informed instructress. The best trait in his character was, that he maintained his poor mother (then a confirmed invalid) in comfort, by his pen. No temptation could induce him to neglect her. No fine acquaintance (for as a successful farce-monger he was a good deal noticed) could teach him to despise her.

At length Mrs. Spight died of consumption, brought on by close rooms, hard work, and a sad heart; but she died not in her miserable little

garret, where she had lived so long, but in a pretty little cottage in Devonshire, curtained with rose, clematis, and jasmine, looking on the blue sea, and freshened with the softest zephyrs: and to this sweet spot, a successful farce had enabled poor young Spight to bear his mother; and there he drew his table to the side of her sofa, and adapted another farce, and coined jokes and puns and quibbles for it, even while tears were in his eyes, and his mother's moan in his ears. And there that mother died, and the only fount of feeling in his breast was dried up. The only being he loved was gone, and he was alone in the world—alone, with a plotting head, an embittered spirit, and a now quite callous heart.

After his mother's death, however, his fancy and his wit seemed to forsake him, and two failures left him destitute. Obliged to do something to maintain himself, he answered an advertisement for an elocution master in an establishment for young ladies; that establishment was “Lancaster House,” and there Devereux Spight

had, among other pupils, Miss Castleton. His talents pleased and captivated her, and her mirth and good humour fascinated him; but there was no question of love in the matter, and therefore the impression lasted, and a regular correspondence ensued between them. After her departure, restored to health and spirits, and wearied of teaching, Devereux Spight tried his pen again, and so successfully, that he continued to translate and adapt plays and farces, till he had realized a sum sufficient to enable him to become proprietor of a stinging, personal, and slanderous Sunday paper, called the Hornet; and at the time of Miss Castleton's return, he was in the enjoyment of an unenviable notoriety, and a dreaded but undisputed power, as holding all the reputations in England in his mean and mischievous grasp.

After this tedious but necessary sketch of Devereux Spight, and his career, we hasten to record his conversation with his friends, or rather his tools, the Evergreens. And here we must remark, in explanation of a fact so strange as the

neat and over-particular Spight's residing with these untidy and slovenly 'blues,' that "Mad Evergreen," their father, had been very kind to him, in his early histrionic and dramatic career, and that Devereux Spight never forgot either benefit or injury; added to this, he was sole master in the house of the devoted and admiring Evergreens, and though even *he* had no power to make them neat in their own persons or their own rooms, he stipulated for ultra cleanliness in his own boudoir and bed-room, which indeed almost took up the housemaid's whole time; thus, as he generally took his meals at his club, and spent the day at his office, he did not much repent an arrangement which had its origin in a sort of feeling for the daughters of "Mad Evergreen."

CHAPTER VIII.

“Once more, *bon jour*, my fair friends,” said Devereux Spight, as the Evergreens rushed to meet him; “now don’t trouble yourselves to be communicative—I know it all—Clementina is come.”

“She is.”

“Is she pretty, lively, and *naïve* as ever?”

“Yes, very little altered, and in high spirits,” said Miss Evergreen.

“Well, she has talked over her romantic plot with you, I suppose?”

“She has, and we are so delighted with it, and

so anxious to do all we can to promote it," cried Thalia.

"I hope not exactly," sneered Spight.

"Why so?" asked Thalia, in alarm.

"Simply because I have devised a little counter-plot, equally advantageous to her, and likely to benefit you, my Evergreens! If you assist me in it, my charming friends," he added, taking a hand of each, "I will do my poor best for your poem, my Melpomene, and for your novel, my Thalia; nay more, fair Evergreen, it may help you to a match suited to your pretensions"—and he smiled a bitter smile.

Poor Miss Evergreen, she trembled and turned pale, while she said to herself, "He must mean his too-entrancing self! He is coming to the point at last—I feel faint!"

"To come to the point at once then," said Spight, teasingly, "and not to keep that kind heart in suspense, not to trifle with the maiden sensibilities of that fond heart, nor unfeelingly to

coy with the natural curiosity of that feminine mind—in short——”

“*In short*, then, let it be,” said Thalia, “for you seem resolved, Devereux, that it shall be at length.”

“My comic muse!” said Devereux; “you are right; learn then, or rather prepare to hear and fortify your gentle breast against the startling fact which, with as much brevity as is consistent with perspicuity, I am about to announce!”

“Sister!” said Thalia, “it is evident that Mr. Spight is in one of his teasing moods; I regret our time is too precious just now even for the agreeable task of furnishing him with inward merriment. Melpomene! oh most degraded of tragic muses, I summon you to the kitchen, to decide on the final doom of two living creatures.”

“A couple of ducks?” asked Spight.

“Exactly.”

“Then I will not delay so important a decision; ducks and green peas were ever objects of my peculiar veneration; let them be forthwith

sacrificed to the household gods—Let a sheet of ‘Passionate Musings’ wrap one tender breast, and one of ‘Merry Andrew, or ask Mamma,’ encircle another. Let their funeral pyre burn clear and bright, and let sage and onion embalm their captivating forms.”

“Well, sister,” said Thalia, “let us go and make the ducks to our taste, or he will make us geese to his.”

As the Evergreens, somewhat offended, prepared, arm-in-arm, to retire, Mr. Spight playfully intercepted them, and said: “No, no, no, what are all the ducks that ever lent a grace to green peas, compared to you, oh “Swans of Thames!” forgive my folly, the result of an unwonted fit of mirth, and listen while I tell you, that to Captain Fitzopal, one of our heiress’s intended suitors, I owe a long succession of grudges. On one occasion I saw him hiss a farce of mine. I showed him up in the Hornet, he recovered damages. I called, and he refused to see me. I hate him, and I will be revenged on him.”

“The base villain, the unnatural monster, to hiss our Devereux,” said Thalia.

“And to commence an action against our Spight!” said Melpomene.

“The ineffable wretch!” cried Thalia, “and he is the very man she is already half in love with; for, having caught a glimpse of him, she is, I believe, already resolved to marry him.”

“Indeed!” sneered Spight.

“Oh, yes, she talks already of reformed rakes, etc. etc.

“So,” said Spight, grinding his teeth—“no matter—listen. I, bottling my wrath, and pocketing for the present all affronts, mean to seek an introduction to him, profess to be his friend, and as if warm in his cause, to let him know that the heiress is in London.”

“Well!” cried Miss Evergreen.

“Go on,” said Thalia.

“And to let him know too,” said Spight, “that she is in the disguise of Miss Evergreen.”

“We have altered that a little,” said Thalia;

"we think it better she should pass as Inez Mc. Alpine, our niece."

"Oh, that she may do if she likes; all I intend is, that Fitzopal should fancy her to be concealed under the name of Evergreen. In short, my Melpomene, that he should woo you, under the idea that you are the heiress. Imagining this, he will slight our pretty Clementina, and pay his whole court to you. Now, if you play your cards well, under this impression, he will propose to you, elope with you, bear you off to Gretna, and you will return Mrs. Fitzopal!"

During this explanation, a change stole over the eager face of poor Evergreen, and tears of disappointment filled her eyes. "How he has deceived me!" she thought; "or, perhaps, how have I deceived myself! to wish to bestow me on another! Well, it is a chance—it seems feasible. Clementina's description of him is fascinating; young, handsome, a captain in the army; and he cannot be more satirical, teasing, and inaccessible

than Spight. What a transferable thing is a woman's heart!"

So thinking, Miss Evergreen turned coldly to Spight, who was indulging in a kind of inward chuckle: "And pray, Mr. Spight," she asked, "if I consent to this scheme, who is to marry Clementina Castleton?"

"Why, if she fixes then on any but old Grumbleby, or young Revel, she loses all but five hundred a year; perhaps I may take pity on her, and marry her with that income."

"Ah, so I thought," sighed Miss Evergreen; "but what has Fitzopal? what fortune has he to maintain a wife and—forgive my maiden blushes—perhaps a family?"

"Oh, he has his pay, and some private fortune, I believe; besides I'll do something for you—put you on the Hornet, or pension you off, should I marry Miss Castleton; but in any case, you cannot be worse off than you are. You've nothing to lose—your husband becomes answerable for your debts, and you will not only be married, but

married to a man half the women in England would jump at."

"Devereux, I consent; but will he not think I look rather too old for six-and-twenty? you know I am six-and-thirty, Spight."

"Why, I ought to know it," sneered Spight, "since I have heard it for the last five years; but you are still a fine woman; India and delicate health would easily account for anything that required explanation. You do not look six-and-thirty when dressed to advantage, and most Indians of six-and-twenty do, and more. Therefore, arrayed in the Eastern style, with those redundant black tresses braided with pearls, which our kind Clementina will lend you—and all the Graces, Arts, and Sciences summoned to your toilet—you will look all we could wish, and certainly quite young and charming enough in the eyes of a young rake and ~~spend~~ drift, who will fancy he sees in you the greatest heiress of the London world. Why, if you were eighty years of age—deformed, crippled, purblind, pur-

deaf, and with the temper of a fury, I would undertake, had you Clementina's fortune, to get you fifty offers every day you remained single, from men of birth, youth, good looks, and good abilities. *Ainsi va le monde!*"

"But a fine woman of six-and-thirty," sighed Miss Evergreen, "need not despair of his love!"

"Certainly not," sneered Spight; "hope springs eternal in the human breast; hope on, hope ever, only, I have my spies about him, and I find his affections (such as they are) are engaged to Lady Fathom—a wife in her teens."

"Oh, shocking! But as his bride, perhaps I may lead him from the altar of Hymen to that of Virtue close by—When shall we meet, Spight?"

"I cannot say exactly; I have yet to manage an introduction to him; luckily my brain is fertile in expedient. Mc. Peevish and Fitz-Plagiar are in this plot. I thought they would be inquisitive and troublesome otherwise, so I enlisted them; but I will give you timely notice—and I advise you, with a bottle of Tyrian dye, to oppose

the incursion of the greys. Forgive a brother's freedom—a word to the wise!"

"Oh readily! Mental excitement, ardent study, and passionate sensibility, have left on *my* head the tints, Time only bestows on soulless clods!"

"And," laughed Thalia, "were I to choose, I would much rather be as grey as a badger than as bald as a coot—a word to the wise——"

"A badger you will ever be, Thalia, whether grey or not."

"Come, come," sighed Miss Evergreen, "a truce with taunts; I will to my bower, to finish my Ode to the Unattainable—it may prove a weapon to conquer, a means to win him. Come then, sister, come to my bower—as yet my maiden bower."

"*Au revoir*, then," said Spight; "we meet at six—when I shall hope to kiss the fair hands of Clementina."

After the Evergreens had withdrawn, Spight indulged in a long quiet chuckle.

“Old fool!” thought he; “well, at any rate I shall be rid of her sentimental importunities—I shall enjoy a rich revenge upon the Captain—have a fair chance of a charming woman and five hundred a year, and obtain the luxury of indulging a little innocent and overflowing spite against all mankind—My haughty popinjay Captain! My dainty Lady! and that old fossil remains of an ass, Sir Noah Fathom—who never thought it worth while to conciliate me, nor send one of his works to the Hornet—I’ll sting him to the quick! I owe the whole universe a grudge! The unhappy son of a lord and a milliner, I have all the pride of the one and the industry of the other. My poor mother! Ah, well, my noble father died in ruin and disgrace, and debt, by his own hand—you in comfort, peace, and competence in your son’s arms! How I have toiled—base-born, self-educated, and with no money but what I coined out of my brain, I am proprietor and editor of the Hornet; and I embarked my all in this speculation because I

saw that slander was an article for which the
was an immense demand—certain to take, and
therefore a capital investment. But latterly
many amateurs and retail-traders have started
up, that unless I greatly renew my stock, and
wholesale warehouse, the Hornet will be done for.
But I must be off, to get the goods ready, and
the articles smartly displayed to advantage,
next Sunday's market. The Fathoms will be
new, having never been exhibited before—and
sell a thousand copies—I must get a good look
at my lady—a little life is so great a help."

So saying, the Editor of the Hornet 'stamped away.'

CHAPTER IX.

Some weeks have passed away since Adolphus Fitzopal paid his first visit to his cousin, as Lady Fathom, and every day in the interval has seen his cab at her house in Belgrave Square, and every day to the question of, "Is her Ladyship at home?" a ready affirmative has been the reply.

Often Major Smiley has accompanied Fitzopal on visits which, professing to be morning calls, have generally ended in the whole party's spending the day together. That is, that Sir Noah, indulgent, confiding, and fond, and generally absent in mind and engrossed by his favourite

pursuits, was often scarcely alive to the fact, that the Major and the Captain, after a lounge and a lunch in Belgrave Square, generally escorted Lady Fathom, either in her rides, drives, or walks in Kenaington Gardens—dined and passed the evening with her, or attended her to the dinner parties and balls, which, when the time for dressing came, he always evaded:—we say Sir Noah was so engrossed by his deep and abstruse studies, that he was often scarcely aware of this fact; but he was so anxious that Ada should enjoy herself without disturbing him, that he would have rejoiced in the arrangement as much as any of the party. And certainly Ada's life at this time was a perpetual fête. Sir Noah, so kind, so contented, so generous—her child so beautiful and blooming—her position so enviable! herself so lovely, so wealthy, so courted—the Captain and the Major rivalling each other in attentions to her—and sweeter still, to her child—Ada had but one source of sorrow, and that

was the wild career and uncertain fate of her dear but disinherited brother, Wildair Revel.

On Captain Fitzopal's earnest assurance to her (in one of their long conferences) that he had no intention of preferring his own suit with the heiress, and on his declaring that there were reasons he could never reveal, which rendered it impossible he should ever address Miss Castleton, Ada, with many tears, confided to Fitzopal her secret anxieties, and her ardent wish that her brother, so destitute, and yet so proud that he would not even see her, lest she should compel him to let Sir Noah assist him, should obtain this prize in the matrimonial lottery, which the Fates seemed to destine to him.

“If I could even find out where he is!” said Lady Fathom. “Oh, Adolphus, I cannot tell you how often in the gayest scenes, at the most brilliant balls, the most luxurious banquets, the thought of Wildair flings a shadow on my heart, and I almost loathe the luxuries that surround me, when I remember he may want even neees-

saries. Yes, I often detest myself for having been so gay, when a brother (who once so loved me) is an outcast and in want!"

Captain Fitzopal had some sympathy, particularly for a pretty woman in distress; tears in Ada's soft blue eyes, and on their brown lashes, spoke to his heart. Ada's bosom heaving with sobs! Ada's cheek pale! Oh, this must not be! He took her cold hand in his—he wiped away her tears—he promised to do his utmost to discover her brother's retreat—he proposed an advertisement, cunningly worded, in all the papers—and his heart bounded when Ada innocently said, raising her eyes to his, and clasping her hands: "Oh, Adolphus! if you do bring Wildair here, how I shall love you——"

But the next moment he felt that heart sink, when she added: "I should feel then as if I had two brothers!"

Still Captain Fitzopal was what this world calls a man of honour, and he kept his word, and gave himself a great deal of trouble to discover the

retreat of Wildair Revel, but without success ; and he was so fascinated, so enthralled, by the charms of his cousin Ada, that for some days he forgot all about his chance of the heiress, and the plot he had overheard in the conversation between Rose Pink and Stubbs. But ere long a succession of duns, two or three lawyers' letters, and an actual writ, made him remember that he was losing a substance for a shadow, and compelled him to think seriously of wooing one woman, while his heart was so hopelessly captivated by another. And yet Captain Fitzopal was a man of honour and feeling. Alas ! for such honour and such feeling ; “ by their fruits ye shall judge them.”

To Major Smiley, as his friend, his adviser, and his confidante, Adolphus Fitzopal had opened his heart, and confided to that subtle personage not only his own secrets, but Ada's too ; and here we may just as well remark to the confiding of both sexes, that in choosing a confidante it would be well to ascertain whether that confidante has not

in his or her turn a confidante, who has his or hers, and so on *ad infinitum*; this would readily explain that great mystery, the swift propagation of the most important secrets, confided only to one dear, trusty friend! Major Smiley at thirty-eight was a man of the world; Adolphus, at three-and-twenty, was only beginning to imbibe its maxims, and was still in some respects a man of feeling. Major Smiley had passions, (and violent ones), but he had no affections, no sympathies, no compunctions. He always reasoned, where Adolphus only felt. He was no melo-dramatic, atrocious villain, for he calculated in everything; and by his calculations he ascertained that in the long run violent crimes generally lead to detection, disgrace, and inconvenience, if nothing worse. These, for some great advantage or delight, according to his selfish and epicurean notions, he might have braved, but he was *un homme blasé*, in a great measure, (or at least he thought himself so), and therefore he did not

feel any temptation strong enough to make him run any great risks.

Major Smiley was a man of talent, and like all clever people, he could, when he chose, make himself very fascinating ; but in a general way that was not worth his while ; he did not meet with many people whom he thought worth exerting himself to please. Besides his pay, he had six hundred a year. An uncle had adopted and brought up Smiley's younger brother, and it was understood that (Gaspar Smiley) our friend should inherit his father's property, his brother his uncle's.

Gaspar's father died, and, to everybody's surprise, died in debt ; Gaspar resolved to cut his brother out with their uncle. He did so. At the uncle's death, Gaspar proved to be sole heir ; his brother Anthony was cut off with a shilling. What arts he had used to promote himself and destroy his brother—what lies he had told—what unbrotherly truths he had revealed, or calumnies invented, are written only in that book the

recording angel keeps, and shall one day read aloud, in a voice of thunder, to a prostrate world.

But certainly, Anthony Smiley, who though too fond of the pleasures of life, had at that time no dark crime to answer for, felt himself bitterly betrayed and wronged; for on Gaspar's offering him a tolerable sum for present exigencies and his help in future trials, he flung the pocket-book tendered to him in Gaspar's face, and told him, in a fit of deadly wrath, (which Gaspar shrunk before) that when they met again, it would be Gaspar who would cry for help, and cry in vain.

So saying, he passed out of the house where he had been brought up, and of which he had ever been taught to consider himself the heir; and from that time to this of our introduction of Major Smiley, he had not been heard of.

Major Smiley was by some people considered very handsome, and he was certainly a fine man; tall, rather embonpoint, fair, with light hair; large, prominent, very light eyes, spotted as it were with iron mould, with bushy white eye-

lashes, and very light eye-brows; his aquiline nose, his fine but thin-lipped mouth, his beautiful teeth, and bushy light whiskers, with a haughty military carriage, and a reserved sententious manner, entitled him to the notice he generally obtained among women—always, as a general rule, most willing to bestow their favour on those who seem least to covet it, particularly if there is anything grand or graceful in this negligence, and if it proceeds from a man with a good face, a fine figure, and a red coat.

With a good deal of natural humour, and quick sarcasm, an occasional show of *bonhommie*, and a general assumption of good fellowship, (to which his embonpoint lent an air of reality,) he was, with men, influential and popular. It was convenient to him to be so, when it gave him no trouble. He was fond of play, when he was quite sure he was more skilful than his antagonist. He was a connoisseur in the opera, the ballet, painting, sculpture, and *virtù*—a good judge, as he himself said, of beauty, of wine, and horses.

His income enabled him, as a bachelor, to live in comfortable and even elegant style ; and he was so judicious in his expenditure, and so wisely economical, that with less than a thousand a year, his "turn out" was neater, and his bachelor *ménage* better appointed, than those of most men with treble his income. Thus, calculating, clever, and wise in this world's vile wisdom, fond of beauty, because it was pleasant to the eye, and of grace and wit, because they charmed and amused him, Gaspar Smiley, though many advantageous overtures had been made to him, had never been tempted to marry. He deliberately weighed the pros and cons in the balance of comfort, and found that bachelorship outweighed matrimony ; but then, strange to say, though many *liaisons* were hinted at, and many unhappy ones supposed to have owed their first step in the downhill path of error to Gaspar Smiley, nothing was positively known of his private profligacy ; and at the age of thirty-eight, he had never known that entralling,

delicious, selfish, enchantment which is called “being in love.”

The first day he beheld Ada Fathom, his heart awoke—an involuntary interest in another swallowed up his calm deliberate devotion to himself, and for the first time in his life, Major Smiley was elated and yet dejected—enchanted and yet miserable.

Had Ada been single, he would have proposed at once, and would have left no arts untried to possess her, because he would have found on calculation that she was necessary to his happiness, and that the shortest way to happiness was through the Church. But Ada was a wife—a mother, good, pure, full of sweet affections, and a woman’s devotion. Gaspar saw the difficulties, nay (to one less persevering) the impossibilities; he calculated :

“I love her as I never loved another woman—It seems impossible I can ever possess her—Would it not be wise to try and forget her? I cannot forget her—All obstacles yield to resolu-

tion and perseverance—Every man has his price, and every woman can be won—Love has its pains, but indifference has no pleasures—Life is more interesting to me since I saw Ada—Sooner or later, she *shall* be mine—In her inmost heart, she has a secret, unacknowledged *penchant* for the boy Fitzopal; that which some would think a barrier may be turned to account—Her brother! she mourns for him! to serve him, would be a road to her heart; her child! will be a fertile source of fears and hopes—*She shall be mine!*—Fitzopal loves her, but with a boy's timid reverential love, not a man's resolute remorseless passion—Even her love for him (should she love him) may avail—if he, directed, advised, prompted by me, seduces her, and incurs all the odium of that seduction, I can easily win her from him—he is the very man to weary of the bird he has caught, and she the woman to seek a prompt revenge—But if I can awaken any preference in her heart over her handsome cousin, if she loves me at once and almost unsought, with the involuntary,

passionate love of poor Lucy or the young Janet, what then? Why, then, my task will be easier, my triumph, my delight ten-fold, my gratitude pshaw! cant of old romances! A man's gratitude because a woman pleases herself at, any sacrifice! Her ultimate fate to be loved, as long as her power to charm, and mine to love, last— And my constancy....Pshaw! Constancy, like love, is quite involuntary—‘*Ni jamais ni toujours n'est la devise des amours!*’ There is no reason after all,” he added, gazing in a large and flattering glass, “why she should not love me as passionately as Janet. Janet, when first she saw me, was sought by a man very well off; and Lucy *would* follow me, though I told her how it would be. But then I did not love them as I do this bewildering, enchanting Ada; and woman's nature is so full of contradiction, that the very passion I feel for her may make her indifferent—just as my indifference roused Lucy's love to madness, and Janet's to devotion. However, I never yet failed in anything I set my heart

on, and all I now resolve is, that sooner or later, by one means or another, she shall be mine. Either, as the idol of the world, the cherished, petted wife of an old dotard, and the adored of Fitzopal, she shall snap all ties and scorn all prejudices for the love of Gasper Smiley, or else, through my means, and owing to my revenge, she shall throw herself away on the boy Fitzopal; and when I have made him requite her folly with ingratitude, and her devotion with inconstancy, then, as Fitzopal's cast-off, abandoned Mistress, she shall still be mine, and learn, when too late, to what she owes her deep downfall and her irretrievable error. A blundering and vain boy, like Fitzopal, cannot enjoy her love without destroying her fame; but I could be her lover, and so manage, that she should rise, rather than sink in public opinion, so careful would I be of appearances and even their shadows. Well, now to discover, if possible, her brother's lurking place—to win his romantic heart by the delicacy of my sympathy, and the assistance so nobly tendered!

How often has a woman sacrificed her own virtue
at the shrine of another's; some women can only
be won to crime by their worship of merit. Oh
weak! oh inconsistent! oh enticing woman!"

CHAPTER X.

Of all the elegant rooms in Sir Noah Fathom's mansion, none was more delightful, more picturesque, more exquisitely comfortable, than the library. Large and airy in itself, a boudoir appropriated to Lady Fathom opened out of it with folding doors, and it was a proof that (in spite of his engrossing hobby,) she was not forgotten, when Sir Noah ordered this room to be fitted up for Lady Fathom; since with all his experiments, litters, and specimens, such a sanc-tum would have been peculiarly convenient to himself. But it was sacred to Ada, and while

the library tables were piled with specimens of fossils, bones, stratified rocks, and all that to the uninitiated looked like rubbish—pictures, plants, busts, musical instruments, and implements of female ingenuity, alone, were seen in Ada's bower. Still the dark crimson carpets of velvet pile, and the damask satin hangings of both rooms gave them an air of unison, advantageous to both ; and Ada's taste had induced her so far to interfere with Sir Noah's retreat, that a few sweet shrubs, gay flowers, and graceful busts and statues, enlivened the library, while a few of the showiest of his specimens, and least hideous of his antediluvian skeletons, proved that she took some interest in her husband's pursuits.

It was a lovely summer day, and the sunshine was playing alike over the fair tresses and the exquisite limbs of a marble Eve at the fountain, and the hideous remains of an ichsiothaurus, in a large glass-case. The soft air sported among the fragrant shrubs and flowers, and seemed to bear them sweet messages from one another ; a large

sleek pet cat, beautifully marked in black and white, stretched himself in ineffable comfort before a fire, which the sun had half extinguished; and Ada's canaries and goldfinches were finishing their morning concert, preparatory to a luncheon and a siesta. In this beautiful boudoir sate Lady Fathom at her embroidery frame; her cousin, Adolphus Fitzopal, was on an ottoman at her feet. Under the pretence of winding and sorting her silks, he was impatiently entangling them. A guitar lay beside him, and had Ada been the girl she looked, one would have gazed with pleasure on the contrasted beauty of the two young people, who formed a picture worthy of the best painter's best attention.

Adolphus Fitzopal was rather tall and very slender, but the remarkable beauty of his figure consisted in its delicate proportions, not in its height or size; his eyes and hair were very dark, his complexion remarkably pale, his features Grecian, their expression when in repose rather melancholy, but when animated, his black eyes

and his fine teeth lightened up his countenance to a very fascinating pitch ; and though his general manner was rather haughty and reserved, he could be very gentle, playful, and winning when he chose. He sang and touched the guitar with great taste ; danced, rode, fenced, &c. &c. to perfection ; was very fond of writing unnecessary billets to pretty women, wrote an elegant hand, and was very choice and fanciful in his note paper, envelopes, and sealing-wax. He spoke French perfectly, having been brought up in his boyhood principally in France—had acquired many *talens de société*, as they are justly called—could copy music, cut out profiles, and take very fair likenesses in miniature, model in wax, make hair chains, compose songs, (music and words), both rather borrowed—but what new songs are not ? In short, he had the beauty, air, figure, and personal daring, with a good deal of the hauteur, disdain, and sarcasm of a modern English officer of birth ; and grafted on that every day character, he had much of the power

to please (when he choose), the gallant devotion to beauty, the accomplishments, and, we fear, the light notions on serious subjects, of a modern French gentleman.

It will be seen from this sketch that he was far from being a desirable companion for the young and lovely wife of an old man, devoted to scientific pursuits. But Ada at nineteen had no one to advise her, and her own giddy head and warm heart counselled her to encourage her cousin's visits, because he had told her he was unhappy everywhere else; and she, alas! was never so happy as when he was near her. Besides, when to Lady Revel's apparent and well-acted amazement, she had at first refused to accept Sir Noah Fathom, and on being wilfully questioned as to whether she liked any one else, she had owned that she preferred her cousin Adolphus to any one in the world, and that she could not bear to go where she should never see him, or break off a friendship so dear to her—that worthless mother had assured her, that her marriage with Sir Noah

Fathom would not oblige her to relinquish her cousin's friendship, or break off her intimacy with him.

“You are no daughter of mine, Ada, I am sure,” had her Ladyship exclaimed, rising in emotion, “if you are not sole and absolute mistress in your own house. There you can invite your cousin as often as you please. Every woman of fashion (and what girl of mine will not be a woman of fashion ?), particularly if married to an old (I mean a middle-aged) man, has some friend or other to escort her about, some one, some many—my daughter will have many I fancy—devoted, ardent admirers, ready to fly for her cloak, her carriage, carry her shawl, her smelling bottle, her fan——”

“Oh, mamma,” had Ada said, “I thought a married woman must have no admirers—no lovers !”

“Oh dear, no, child ! only platonic admirers—cavaliers !—friends !”

“And may I,” asked the poor child, “have

Adolphus for my platonic admirer, Mamma?" smiled the blushing Ada, through her tears.

"Of course you may," said Lady Revel, adjusting her collar. "You need not call him a platonic lover—that is old-fashioned—but Sir Noah's friend—your cavalier—*l'ami de la maison*. It is your only chance of keeping up your acquaintance with him, Miss Revel"—had the mother added, seeing Ada, but half convinced, had begun to weep afresh—"if you do *not* marry Sir Noah, Adolphus Fitzopal never sets his foot in this house again. But I wonder at you, Ada! Any liking he has, is for Fanny, and here you are, so envious, so selfish, and so perverse, that you slight a man like Sir Noah, who has thrown himself and his ten thousand a year at your feet, to rob poor Fanny of her first and only admirer, with a few hundreds!"

"Oh no! no! indeed you wrong me, mamma; but I do not think he does admire Fanny most."

"Perhaps he hides that from you; but lookers-on are the best judges of those things, and we all

see it. However, be that as it may, I dare say he likes you, and admires you too, and if you marry Sir Noah, as I said, you may make him your cavalier—your platonic admirer. If you do not, I shall insist on Sir Wildair's forbidding him the house, and he shall know the reason."

"Oh no, Mamma, not for worlds ! he would think me so forward, for he never told me..... And you say Sir Noah will let him visit us, and _____"

"Of course he will—you need not ask his leave, I should think. Never ask your husband's leave, Child, about any thing you wish to do. Men, the best of them, are very contradictory and tyrannical, and it gives them an opportunity of refusing you."

"But I shall have to vow to obey him, Mamma!"

"Exactly, but as it is quite certain, my love, that no wife should disobey a husband's positive commands (except in an extreme case), so her art consists in evading his giving her any. He

cannot call you disobedient for doing things he has never forbidden. Invite your Cousin when you are married, as a matter of course. He will think nothing of it. Ask it as a favour, and most husbands would either refuse, or begin to hum and haw—not poor dear Sir Noah probably, for he is the very soul of good-nature—so devoted to you, and so engrossed by his pursuits.” (What a contradiction was there, cunning matchmaker!). “But as a general rule, wives should take their own way; and what men are brutes enough rudely to forbid, for no reason when meekly asked, they are too lazy and supine, actively to prevent, when settled without asking. In your place I would have not merely Adolphus, but all the gayest beaux in London for my cavaliers.”

“Oh, I don’t want any but Adolphus; if you think, Mamma, he may be my cavalier, if he wishes it——”

“Of course he may, and of course he will wish it when you are the Queen of the fashionable world—the idol of Almacks—the belle of the

park!—the load star of the opera—when the lovely Lady Fathom will smile from every print-shop—when your equipage will be the handsomest, your jewels the most precious, your house the noblest, and your parties the gayest in London! Go to, child, and bathe your eyes and smoothe your hair. Every woman has one chance in her life of rising in the social scale—and this is yours. Even if Adolphus does not admire you now, he will when all London is running after you. I only wish I had my time over again. I had an offer almost as good as this of yours, and I married your Father for love! You know how he requites me—always out with the hounds, or his gun, or rod—never fit to be seen after dinner, poor man! and spending the few minutes before dinner, when we do meet, in finding fault with every thing, and refusing the little money I ask for; yet that was a love match!"

It was by such arguments as these that, with a very inconvenient liking for her cousin, (though not a positive love for him,) Ada Revel had

accustomed herself, at once, to think of Sir Noah as her husband, and Adolphus Fitzopal as her friend, her companion, her beau—in short, her platonic lover.

However, directly after Ada's marriage, Adolphus had been ordered to Malta, to join his regiment, and during the first two years of her married life, (much of which had been spent in travelling,) Ada had become so fond of her husband, and so passionately devoted to her child, that the dangerous interest she had taken in her cousin, had yielded to time, absence, and other affections; but it was dormant, not extinct, and the constant attentions he now paid her, his accomplishments, his elegance, but above all, his occasional dejection, and a sort of mournful reserve which he assumed, when alone with her, were beginning, unconsciously to herself, to revive something of her former interest in him; while his apparent indifference to his chance of the heiress, and his concern in her brother's doubtful fate, (that brother so dangerous a rival, were he

not sincere in his disdain of Miss Castleton) added a feeling of gratitude and esteem to her former admiration ; and, but for the well remembered advice of her matchmaking mamma, Ada would perhaps have asked, not only her own partial heart, but her kind, fond husband, whether she did wisely in spending almost all her leisure time with her fascinating cousin.

“And what have you been doing all day, Adolphus ?” asked Lady Fathom, who had spent some hours in the unpleasant occupation of expecting her cousin—(he, like all people in his state of mind, having tossed about all night, and risen late in the morning).

“All day ! sweet Coz !” replied the Captain, gazing up into her smiling face—“why the day has but just begun. It’s only half-past three—”

“Only half-past three ! for shame, you idle boy ! why even *I* (though I went to bed, worn out with the polka) have already taken a long walk with little Noah—have helped my husband

to put his museum in order—and have taken a long ride with him on his favourite hobby."

"How so, Ada?"

"Why I have actually listened to his last chapter on fossils, and written it out for him!"

"How you spoil him!" said the Captain, pettishly.

"Not more than he does me, kind old darling!"

"How you humour all his whims!"

"As he does mine, Adolphus. The great secret of wedded happiness—as you will find, if after all you woo and win Miss Castleton. What shall I do without you?" added Ada, (bent on teasing him a little), "who will sort my silks, carry my parasol, play with little Noah, and read the Hornet and the new French novels to me?"

"Ada, you tease me, you trifle with me, you know full well the heiress is nothing, can be nothing to me, but——"

"But your wife, fair Coz. Ah, do not think the look Major Smiley gave you, when you spoke

of her, escaped me. You had been assuring me that, for Wildair's sake, you would not even see her, and Major Smiley gave you a look—
But, hark ! I hear dear Sir Noah—

“ His very step has music in’t,
As he comes up the stair.”

“ Tormenting !” muttered Adolphus ; “ yes, here he is ! Ada ! I have so much to say to you —when will he be absent again ?”

“ Never more completely *absent* than when present. Ah, here he comes ! Now watch him, he is so funny ! he does not perceive us, and he is always talking to himself when he is alone——”

“ About you ?” asked Fitzopal, with a covert sneer.

“ Oh no ! about my rivals !”

“ Your rivals, Ada ?”

“ Yes, and very powerful rivals too—no less than the *Plesiosaurus*, and the *Ichsiothaurus dolichodorus*.”

“ How she provokes me !” thought Fitzopal ;

"she does not care for me—she has no heart—why should I regard her, except as a woman to trifle with, not a being to worship. *Ada*," he said, earnestly endeavouring to meet the laughing eyes that were following Sir Noah, "I have some very important things to say to you!"

"Then say them at once."

"What now, *Ada*?"

"Yes, now; no one minds Sir Noah, and he minds no one—look at him. Oh, I see him, his crabbed MS. in one hand, and the tusk of some antediluvian monster under his arm. Exactly, now he is coming forward, he has placed the treasure on the table, and he is examining it with rapture. Now listen."

Just at this moment, Sir Noah, standing, as Lady Fathom said, in rapture before his prize, exclaimed, after some moments of deep thought:

"It must be so! what a sublime, what a perfect creature!"

"Thank you, my love, for the compliment,"

laughed the young wife ; “ of course you mean me ?”

“ Wonderful being !” continued Sir Noah, too engrossed to hear or heed her—“ combining the characteristics of the ant-eater, the armadillo, and the mammoth !”

“ Forgive my impatience, my lovely cousin,” whispered Fitzopal, “ but call you this being appreciated !”

“ Yes, more than appreciated, a good deal. Thank you, Sir Noah, go on with my portrait ; you make me in love with myself. Hark !”

“ Magnificent being !” continued Sir Noah, much excited, “ thy haunches five feet wide, thy body twelve feet long, each foot a yard in length, and armed with giant claws ! With one lash of thy tail, thou couldst have demolished the congar, with one pat of thy paw have annihilated the crocodile !”

He sits down and writes vehemently.

“ Ada !” said Fitzopal, aware that his fine eyes were moist, (with pity for his own sorrows, not

hers), “you have forbidden all comment of mine on your husband’s peculiarities and his behaviour to you; but my heart is full—I must speak—I must bewail your fate, and tell you, whether you know it or not, the absurd yet miserable truth, that you are wedded to one who sees no charms in breathing beauty—no loveliness in Ada’s form, compared to that of the fossil remains of some monster of a half-created world !”

“You wrong him, Adolphus, and you disobey me: besides he does both love and admire me. When he courted me, he declared I had the grandeur of the *Dinotherium*, united to the agility of the *Ichsiothaurus*, and he’s very fond of me still, in his own way; but he’s subject to such long fits of absence.”

“I wish he’d have one now,” inwardly ejaculated Fitzopal. “I must tell her how miserable I am; I must see if she has any feeling, any care for me—else why, on the brink of ruin, do I sacrifice to her the time which would secure me so much wealth! Her brother is not to be

found ; I can never hope to marry Ada ! and if I could bring myself to take any trouble about Miss Castleton—if it were not so odious a bore to me to woo any other woman, (an heiress particularly,) and if it would not distress Ada to see her brother's chance lost, I should be just as likely to captivate her as a married man as not. For a Platonic lover—and at any rate till she likes me much better than she does now, I cannot hope to be anything else to her—I might as well be married, nay, better, for wealth is power ; and poverty, by shutting me up in a prison, will destroy all my hopes. To see how fondly she is watching the quizzical old caricature ! Smiley is right—women have no souls ! They are pretty dolls to play with, not saints to enshrine and worship. The more one slights them, the more they court one. Smiley says I might, if I would, be the Buónaparte of the boudoir—that Lady Greville blushes at my name, and the Comtesse de la Rose had an *attaque de nerfs*, because I sent an excuse, after promising to be at her ball ; and

with all this, I am to be made a fool of, by a wife of nineteen, with such a husband ! I'll just try her again."

"Cousin Ada ! you look rather pale ; suppose we take a turn in the Square ; Sir Noah will not be aware of your absence, perhaps, since as yet he is unconscious of your presence."

"Ah, he soon will be though. I'll arouse him ; I am going to-day to put him to a test many, much more complimentary husbands, will not stand so well as Sir Noah. Just step quietly in behind me, and I think you will see him to advantage."

Lady Fathom went up to Sir Noah with an air of playful fondness.

"I do believe," said Fitzopal to himself, "she loves the old fossil remains of an ass—she, whom I have taken such pains, and made such sacrifices, to fascinate. I think," he whispered bitterly, as Ada, unnoticed by Sir Noah, put her hand on his arm, "your Ladyship is losing time!"

"And temper too, cousin," retorted Ada,

nettled. "Sir Noah ! my love!" she cried, fondly putting her arm round his neck.

Sir Noah, still eagerly writing, replied mechanically, "Well, my darling!"

"Do attend to me, there's a dear old Noah," said Lady Fathom, reproachfully; "I want to talk to you on business. Satinette has a sum to make up by to-morrow night, and has called on me about her bill——"

"Her bill!" absently repeated Sir Noah.

"Yes, her bill," replied Lady Fathom; "and a tolerably long bill too."

"Shaped like a snipe's?" asked Sir Noah, just then deep in the history of birds before the deluge; "ah, a very long bill! Let's see the wader's bill—now wait, I'll tell you"—turns to a plate of the wader.

"Frown on me as you will, cousin," said Fitzopal, I cannot bear to see this—there, let me go—let me go."

"Whither, Adolphus?"

"Anywhere, anywhere! all places are the same

to me when I leave your side, cousin Ada ! I'll step to Howell's and James's, or to Swan and Edgar's, to match those silks better. Harmony is the soul of everything—both silks and sentiments."

"Then do not you try to promote discord ; step into my boudoir, and either amuse yourself with listening to my manœuvres, or finish copying out your sweet little French song, *Le soupir étouffé*."

"I cannot disregard or disobey you, Ada !" said the Captain, going into the boudoir.

"Sir Noah !" said his Lady, playfully stopping his pen ; "now don't provoke me ; I was asking you about Satinette's bill, the bill of Satinette !" she added slowly, articulating each syllable distinctly.

"My darling !" replied Sir Noah, half aroused ; "Satinette ! Satinette ! there's no such creature mentioned in either Cuvier or Buckland—what genus ? what species ?"

“Genus, woman ! species, milliner !” laughed Ada.

“My lovely one ! my pretty clever pet !” said Sir Noah ; “I see, love ! I’ll attend directly—just stop one minute”—(he runs his finger down the index of his book—) “Nautilus fossil species—nautilus sypho—nautilus zic zac—naut——”

“Naughty old fellow !” cried Lady Fathom, snatching away his book.

“Give me my book, love ! I want my book, my darling !” cried Sir Noah.

“Well,” said Lady Fathom, opening his desk, “here’s a book”—gives him his cheque-book, puts a pen into his hand—“now write a cheque for a hundred and fifty pounds for Satinette——”

“Yes, my love ! but a hundred and fifty pounds, it seems a good deal ; for that very sum Herr Vanderhümbügger has offered to sell me the vertebrae of the moosaurus, and the jawbone of the plesiosaurus dolichodorus for my museum—a specimen of which——”

“Sir Noah !” said Lady Fathom, much hurt,

“this is the first specimen I have had of any indifference to me and my wishes, and it is one I did not expect from so indulgent a husband ; but be it so, let Vanderhümbügger cheat you out of your money for the back-bone of an ass, and the jaw-bone of a cow ; and while you revel in such elegant luxuries, let me break my promise with poor Satinette, who has a large sum to make up by to-morrow night—a promise I made her in entire reliance on the great liberality you have shown me, and your own kind request that I would consider your funds as mine.”

“ My dearest love ! ” said Sir Noah, drawing her towards him, “ my own Ada ! I am not such a wretch—give me the cheque-book, my child ; but as to my being taken in about the vertebrae of the moosaurus, or the jaw-bone of the plesiosaurus dolichodorus, why you see, my love”— (and he took up his book of plates).

“ I see you will forget all about poor Satinette, Noah, if you begin with that subject.”

"Ah, perhaps so! What sum, love, and for whom?"

"One hundred and fifty pounds for Madame Satinette, 500, St. James's Street."

Sir Noah wrote it.

"There, my sweet love, do you want any more?"

"No, dearest, kindest one, and I should not want this, but that you compelled me to be so extravagant in Paris—you would have me order everything I admired."

"And I fear, forgot that I did not mean you to pay for my presents. There, love, while the book's here, I'd better write you a cheque for yourself. Here it is, sweet, and now I must be off to the British Museum. Dear me, (looking at the time-piece) I ought to have been there two hours ago. Ada, I must be off directly to the British Museum."

"Well, then, I will not detain you; only mind, dearest, that you're not locked in again all night there, as you were last time, among all

the other old curiosities," said **Lady Fathom**, archly.

"My dear," replied **Sir Noah**, "that was one of the most delightful nights I ever spent."

"Thank you, **Sir Noah**," said **Ada**, curtseying playfully.

"In that night," continued **Sir Noah**, "while musing in the dark, a new light dawned on me, with which I mean to enlighten——"

"Any one but me," said **Ada**, pretending to close her ears; "my poor head aches with so much science."

"Why, my love," said **Sir Noah** simply, "before we were married, you took as much interest as I do in these discoveries. I remember **Lady Revel** told me she could hardly prevent your sitting up all night to read my "Antediluvian World;" and **Miss Golightly**, your governess, assured me you had written some very pretty elementary treatises yourself."

"Ah, **Sir Noah**, I need not inform you, that people's tastes change after marriage."

“Indeed !”

“Yes, you know that !” said Ada, kissing him.

“I wonder what she means,” thought Sir Noah ; “however, no matter, she’s fonder of me than ever, so it doesn’t matter ; perhaps she hints at my leaving her.”

“Ada, will you come with me, love ?” he asked.

“No, dearest ! not to-day, I am going to the gardens with Adolphus and little Noah.”

“Little cherub ! I’ve a great mind to go too.”

“Do, dearest, do !” cried Lady Fathom, catching his arm.

“But no ! no ! I forgot, I cannot, love,” said Sir Noah, seizing the tusk, “this admits of no delay ; Vanderhümbügger expects me there ! this must not be neglected for a moment.”

“An old fossil !” murmured Lady Fathom aside, “must not be neglected for a moment ; a young wife may be slighted for months together.”

Sir Noah in a fit of absence took up Captain

Fitzopal's military cap, in a reverie he put it on his head, ~~had~~ part before, and was going out.

"Sir Noah! Sir Noah!" cried Lady Fathom, laughing and running after him, "are you mad? see how lucky you are to have a wife to look after you. Adolphus! Adolphus!"

Captain Fitzopald entered with a dejected air, which yielded to irrepressible laughter when he saw Sir Noah in his cap.

"Will you ring for Stubbs?" asked Lady Fathom.

"For Stubbs!" repeated Captain Fitzopal, "what that clod? that quiz, that rarest of spectacles!"

"An honest man," replied Lady Fathom; "yes, such as he is, he is the only servant I can trust to bring Sir Noah safe back again!"

"She's very silly," thought Fitzopal to himself; "why, if he didn't come safe back again, with her jointure I'd marry her at once; but she never dreams of that!—"

Lady Fathom having given Sir Noah his hat,

and carefully arranged his hair, his collar, and his cravat, tried to detain him.

“ My love, I must be off, I must indeed,” he cried; “ good bye.”

“ What can she keep him for ? ” thought Fitzopal, biting his lips with impatience. “ She knows I want to talk to her in private ; she must do it to tease me ! oh, well, he’s off at last ! now, on her behaviour will depend my conduct with the heiress, by George ! ”

Sir Noah, who had reached the door, turned back :—“ I beg your pardon—good day, Captain ; I depend on you to take care of Lady Fathom ; don’t let her miss me—— ”

“ Depend on me, Sir Noah, I will do my best to entertain her ladyship.” (“ Now he is fairly off —now we shall be alone at last.”)

Sir Noah at that moment re-entered : “ My love, I have forgotten my spectacles—look for them, darling, will you ? ”

“ Why they’re on your nose, dear,” laughed Ada.

“Thank you, love, I couldn’t see them there, could I?”

“No,” inwardly growled Fitzopal, stalking to the window; “old spectacled bear, I believe you cannot see things much plainer than the nose on your face. I am growing mad with impatience. Who’s this?”

“Did you want me, my lady?” asked Stubbs, coming in.

“Yes, Stubbs, run after your master—he’s going to the British Museum—keep close to him—don’t let him be run over—bring him safe home to dinner.”

“A precious hard job, my lady.”

“How so, Stubbs?”

“Why, lauk, Feather’s wildest colt never led me such a chase as dear old master done the last time we went——”

“To the British Museum!” interrupted Fitzopal; “be off!”

“To that ere valuable institution, my lady—that monument of national glory, my lady,

throw'd open to a generous public, where pearls
is cast afore many a swine, and the march of
intellect breaks into a canter——”

“Then, I beg you will do the same, Stubbs,
and make the best of your way after Sir Noah.”

“Where did that rustic bore get all that
trash?” asked Fitzopal, as Stubbs hurried off.

“Out of his own head, I believe. Frill tells
me, he's an author. Why here's Sir Noah again,
I declare.”

“I forgot my treasure!” said Sir Noah.

“What me? love!”

“He'll never go—I'll go myself,” muttered
Fitzopal.

“No, not you, love!” said Sir Noah, seizing
on the tusk; “I never forget you—I could as
easily forget myself—good bye, darling, now I
am off.”

So saying, he hugged up the tusk of the
dinotherium, and repelled, with a mysterious
air, Stubbs's offers of assistance.

“Are you going, Adolphus?” asked Lady Fathom, seeing the Captain take up his cap.

“Not if I can converse with you alone, Ada.”

“Well, we are alone!”

“Yea, at last! thank heaven we are, let us sit down.”

As he placed chairs for both, Sir Noah put in his head at the door.

“I didn’t say good bye to you, Ada, so I’m come back on purpose; give me a kiss, love—I’ll soon come home.”

“The sooner the better,” replied Ada, rushing to, and embracing him.

“The sooner the better!” muttered Fitzopal between his teeth. “The sooner the better!” he repeated, looking bitterly at the pair, and mimicing Ada’s voice: “Country simpleton! silly trifler! household doll! confound it;—but I do believe he is off at last—if not, by all that’s accursed, I am——”

“Adolphus!” said Lady Fathom, approaching him, “have you copied out ‘*le soupir étouffé*’?”

“ I have, Ada, though I was scarcely equal to the task. Forgive me, Ada! I must, I will speak. It breaks my heart to see your devotion to one so indifferent, to mark how little attention he pays you, whose life’s devotion one smile of yours should purchase.”

“ Nay, nay, cousin,” replied Ada; “ you do not understand him. If Sir Noah makes me few pretty speeches, he never yet wounded my ear and my heart with one unkind word. If he will have his own way in the Antediluvian world, he wishes me to have mine in the fashionable one; he would rather pay a long bill than a short compliment. What can a wife wish for more?”

“ What more! what more! oh, Ada! why, harmony of souls, sympathy of tastes, a kindredness of age, of feelings, of sentiments—the man you love should have no dream, no hope, no thought, no pursuit, but you; all the energies of his soul should be dedicate to your service, all the powers of his mind to your amusement.”

“ Well, what Love has denied, Friendship

supplies, Adolphus; all this, dear Sir Noah allow me to enjoy in the society of a friend?"

"A friend! Ada, and whom?"

"Why you, Adolphus, you!"

"Ah!" thought Adolphus, "had any other woman said that, I should think she meant all I could wish; but she, rustic girl! she only sees in me a friend, a husband might sanction. Yet how *piquante*, how lovely she is."

"Ada!" he asked, taking her hand, "am I indeed that friend? Am I so blest?"

"You know you are, cousin; but you look sad—let us go to the Gardens with baby."

"No, no, Ada, to me this is the garden of Eden."

"Then let us keep it so," said Lady Fathom, withdrawing her hand, "for Eden ceased to be, when woman grew discontented with her lot."

"What woman of spirit, Ada, in your place, could be content?"

"What woman of heart, cousin, would not? but enough of this—once more, I will not hear

you. The serpent that tempts the Eve of the gay world is generally some wily cavalier like you, cousin, and the forbidden fruit he proffers are those flatteries which exalt her at the expense of her husband. Exalt! did I say? Nay, rather debase; for that woman is indeed debased who suffers him to be disparaged whom she has sworn to love and honour."

"And obey!" added Fitzopal, bitterly.

"And obey!" repeated Ada, with dignity. "The man whom a woman can love and honour, cousin, she will not find it so galling to obey. Such a man is above all petty tyranny, and is not always exacting her obedience to shew his power; but, come," she added, laughing, "it was in Adam's absence Eve was tempted. Once for all, Sir Noah is the very best of husbands."

"What Ada! is he the person you could have chosen as the object of your young heart's first love—that involuntary feeling, that dream, worth a thousand realities of a thousand lives—that evanescent bloom on life's fairest fruit—that

lunar rainbow of youth's starry heaven? Ada, is he all this?"

Again Fitzopal took her hand, and fixed his dark eyes, moist with tears, on hers. She snatched her hand away, and averted her eyes.

"Ah!" thought Fitzopal, "Smiley would call that a good symptom and aver that she fears my look, my touch." "Are you offended, Ada, that you thus withdraw your hand?"

"No, not exactly; only you will trespass on forbidden themes. Excuse me for a few minutes," she added, resolutely rising, "I must go and see if little Noah is asleep."

So saying, Lady Fathom, with a flushed cheek, an unquiet heart, but a calm and stately step, walked out of the room.

"Now were I a *roué*," said Fitzopal to himself, "would she not provoke me to use all arts, and with remorseless cunning, do my best, or rather worst, to make her hear me. Alone, or not alone, it's all the same; there seems a magic

circle drawn around her which I cannot overstep. Anywhere else I fancy I could get on with her ; but here, what with little Noah and great Noah, this confounded house is to her an ark of refuge, in which she is wafted above the waves of passion, and secured even from the quicksands of temptation ; she must, she shall know that I love her ; and I must know that she returns that love. I cannot, in this state of suspense, set myself to courting the heiress ; I could, were I sure of Ada's affection, and I must, for ruin stares me in the face ; besides Smiley hinted that we're beginning to be talked of ; I shall be the standing joke of 'ours,' the laughing-stock of the mess. Then see, she doesn't come—how she wastes the time ! What a fool she is to think I'll throw away my chance of Miss Castleton for her, when she won't sacrifice one country prejudice or childish scruple to me ! Why, there's a knock—and she never has the sense to say 'not at home,' these are the cursed interruptions one is always subject to

here. I'll go into the boudoir—some bores, no doubt!"

So saying, Captain Fitzopal walked into the inner room, and pettishly pushed the door to, just as Trueman, the butler, announced Mr. Devereux Spight, Mr. Mac Peevish, and Mr. Fitzplagiar!

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen," said Trueman, placing chairs, "I thought her ladyship was here—she is at home I know—I will let her know directly—Sir Noah is out."

So saying, the well-bred butler noiselessly withdrew.

Now Mr. Devereux Spight, never very amiable, was at this moment in an excessively ill-humour—an ill-humour caused by the presence of Mac Peevish and Fitzplagiar at a time when he particularly wished to have the field to himself. Mac Peevish, who was somewhat obtuse, not perceiving certain symptoms of overboiling irritability in Mr. Devereux Spight, went up to him and said, in a lacrymosial tone of voice, and with

a coaxing manner: "To think, Spight, of Sir Noah's not being at home! Isn't it strange I never find people at home, not even when I come by appointment?"

"Not at all," replied Spight, with a provoking smile, "I should think it more strange if you did!"

"What do you mean by that, Mr. Spight?"

"I mean what I say."

"Well, I think," whined Mac Peevish, "it's a very odd remark."

"Not at all," sneered Spight; "you're known to come asking favors, are you not? People hear your name—it warns them to be off!"

"But what would you have me do, Spight?" asked Mac Peevish, half crying.

"Do!" replied Spight, "why give a loud rat-tat like the postman—cry in a shrill voice, 'Milk below!' 'Baker!' anything—or send up word you want to see the Master of the house on business of great importance to *him*; ha! ha! ha!"

"Well!" whined Mac Peevish, "the publication

of a grand, moral, philosophical, geological work
is of importance to——”

“To people who'll never look into it!” inter-
rupted Spight.

“How bitter you are to-day, Spight!” said
poor Mc. Pecvish. “Why should they never look
into it?”

“Why the deuce should they? Who that
could avoid it, would? Some poor devil of a
reviewer must glance at a sentence here and
there, just to ‘cut it up’ or ‘write it down,’ but
no one else would be bored with it.”

“Alas!” cried Fitzplagiar, who had been
looking over his own MS. “I quite agree with
our dear Spight; and the poet in these days, is as
much neglected as the philosopher, as I said in
my ‘Pleasures of Pain.’

‘And when I say, a hundred lines I've wrote!
My friend's in fear that I'll repeat them too!’”

“Exactly!” said Spight, “or as Byron has
it:—

'When people say they've written fifty lines,
They make one fear that they'll repeat them too.'"

"I don't remember those lines in Byron, Mr. Spight," said Fitzplagiar.

"I dare say not, my dearest Fitzplagiar," said Spight. "But other people will."

"Do you mean to say I knew they were in Byron, Sir?" asked Fitzplagiar, reddening and bristling.

"Why, I can't exactly say, my dear Plagiar," sneered Spight, "for you've certainly *read* very little, though you've written a great deal; but if you did not know it, it's a very extraordinary coincidence, the same idea striking a great and a little mind!"

"A little mind, Sir," shouted Fitzplagiar; "pray whose do you mean, Sir?"

"Oh, Byron's, of course!" said Spight, with a bitter laugh.

"Sir!" said Fitzplagiar, going up to Spight, and clenching his fist—"I only wish I knew whether that was what you meant."

“Nay,” said Spight, “as you said in your ‘Pleasures of Poverty,’

‘Where ignorance is joy,
‘Tis madness’ self to learn;’

Or, as Gray has it—

‘Where ignorance is bliss,
‘Tis folly to be wise! ’ ”

“Sir!” stammered Fitzplagiar, in a rage, “I’ll tell you what, Sir! I don’t like your manner towards me, Sir!”

“Well, Sir,” sneered Spight, perfectly calm, “it’s quite in your power to avoid it. You sought me, Sir.”

“Yes, I did, Sir; but little knowing what I should find you, Sir—Sir, you’ve been my ruin; by your advice I invested the savings of years in the Trifler. It is done up—what have I to show for my money?”

“Your own articles, which but for that money you could never have got into any publication!”

“I dare say! why, I ought to have been paid

for them ; but that's not all ; I have gone to great expense and trouble to entertain you like a gentleman !”

“ Certainly,” said Spight, quietly, “ that must have been an effort indeed !”

“ I don't wish to say anything inhospitable or mean, Sir, but I've given you dinners, a Duke might have sat down to——”

“ Yes ! but he'd soon have got up again.”

“ I spared no expense——”

“ To buy favourable opinions in the Hornet.”

“ Yes, Sir ! and where are all your promises ?”

“ Why, where they were,” said Spight, unmoved.

“ Didn't I introduce you to my dear and gifted friend Mc. Peevish ?” cried Fitzplagiar, “ and haven't you behaved much the same to him ? He was a bank clerk, with two hundred a year ; you persuaded him his literary genius would realize two thousand, if he devoted all his time to authorship under your patronage ; he threw up his clerkship ; what have you done for him ?

Nothing. But you got his situation for some friend of your own, who paid you a handsome bonus, and is, I dare say, to pay you a percentage. I believe you advertised the situation as one you could confer for a handsome premium, before Mc. Peevish had resigned it! and then, jealous of his genius, you have never even reviewed his works!"

"My dearest Fitzplagiar," cried Mc. Peevish, coming forward, "don't excite yourself! Mr. Spight has behaved most scurrilously to both of us; but he has done his worst!"

"No, no," said Spight, "there you're mistaken! you have yet to learn what my worst is."

Infuriated by his calm and his smile, the poor authors, exclaiming in one voice, "What, do you defy us!" darted at Spight. "Off, off," said Spight, seizing the poker, and stepping behind an arm chair, "I defy you both to mortal combat at the point of—the pen!"

At this moment Captain Fitzopal, who had been for some time highly amused by the dis-

cussion, indignant at the violent shape it was assuming, entered and said, in a haughty voice : “ Pray, Sirs, what does this outcry and commotion mean ? you will alarm her Ladyship.”

“ Pray, Sir !” asked Spight, coldly, “ by what right do you presume to take me to task, or comment on my conduct ?”

“ My name is Fitzopal, Sir ! Captain Fitzopal, Sir Noah’s intimate friend ; and, in his absence, doing the honours of his house.”

“ Captain Fitzopal !” said Mc. Peevish, with awe.

“ Captain Fitzopal !” echoed Fitzplagiar, in the same tone ; and they both bowed low, while the Captain returned their obeisance in the haughtiest manner.

“ We humbly beg pardon,” said Mc. Peevish, “ if in the heat of a literary discussion we have disturbed you, Sir ; but as you *are* here, perhaps, as so high an authority in the military and the literary world, you will act as umpire, and decide our dispute !”

"Sir," said Finsop, with ineffable scorn, "I have nothing to do with disputes, decided, as it seems this is to be, at the point of—the pen!"

"No, Sir," said Devereux Spight, nettled by his evasions. "I fancy you would find it difficult to parry a thrust from that weapon!"

"What do you presume to mean by that, Sir?" asked the Captain, in amazement and wrath.

"Sir," said Devereux Spight, calmly tapping his tiny foot with a tiny walking stick, "I never answer an impertinent question."

"But I always question an impertinent answer," said the Captain, recovering his hauteur; "allow me to offer you my card, and to request the honour of yours. I shall expect you to meet me, Sir!"

"Then you will enjoy the greatest of pleasures!" replied Spight, (laying down the Captain's card), and emulating his insolence and disdain.

"As how, Sir!" asked the Captain, pale with suppressed indignation.

“The pleasures of anticipation I mean—ha, ha, ha !” said Spight.

“Do you mean to say, Sir, that you decline my challenge !”

“I do, Sir.”

“And on what grounds, pray ?”

“That we cannot meet on an equality, Sir,” said Spight, bowing as if in deference ; but the bitter sneer on his lip would have belied that inference, in the mind of any one who knew the man.

“Well, that’s modest at any rate,” said the Captain, growing more scornful and contemptuous ; “you mean, of course, that you are no gentleman ?”

“No, Sir,” sneered Spight, “I mean that I am no fool. You would have a chance of blowing my brains out, but I should have none such with you.”

“How so, Sir ?” stammered the Captain, losing his self-possession in his violent rage.

“For the simple reason that you have no

brains—Ha! ha! ha!” Upon this, Mc. Peevish, turning to Fitzplagiar, exclaimed, “The Hornet has stung him home! Good, by Jove! Ha! ha! ha!”

“Capital, by Apollo!” said Fitzplagiar; “Ha! ha! ha!”

Where this would have ended, none can tell, for the Captain was fast losing his self-control, and strutting up to the calm and infuriating Spight, would possibly have forgotten himself so far as to have struck the editor of the Hornet, but at that very moment, Lady Fathom entered the room. At her approach, Mc. Peevish and Fitzplagiar, awed by her rank, drew back with a succession of low bows. Devereux Spight, struck by her beauty and her youth, made a graceful obeisance; and Captain Fitzopal, confused at being found in such an unwonted passion, twirled his moustachios and settled his collar.

“What is the meaning of the vehement discussion I partly overheard? Captain Fitzopal! what is the matter?”

“ That your Ladyship must ask these—
persons. I was in the inner room, when their
indecent brawls disturbed me; I feared they
might alarm you, and awake little Noah——”

“ Ha! ha!” thought Spight; “ Oh! oh!
what tender reproach in her eyes! how she
blushes—I see, she likes him—her cavalier, no
doubt! To secure Sir Noah’s favour, we must
first secure my lady’s, and to secure her’s, we
must have the Captain’s good word; besides, I
must get his ear for my other object: luckily he
does not know me by sight as the editor of the
Hornet.” “ Captain Ftizopal,” he said, “ I re-
tract any offensive expression I may have used.
I was irritated by the ingratitude of two of my
protégées.”

“ Sir!” said Fitzopal, on whose mind had
dawned a notion that he was the editor of the
Hornet, “ I accept your apology.”

“ We your protégées!” cried Mc. Peevish
and Fitzplagiar, in a breath—“ we grateful!”

“It would be a wonder if you were,” said Spight, “for gratitude betokens a great mind!”

“Pray, Sir, what have we to be grateful for?” asked Fitzplagiar.

“For!——for some excellent advice!”

“Ah!” said Lady Fathom, laughing, “who was ever grateful for that?”

“Who indeed?” said Spight.

“But,” asked Lady Fathom, turning to Mc. Peevish, “may I inquire what is your business here?”

“My lady,” said Mc. Peevish, “I am here by appointment with Sir Noah; he has condescended, by his publisher’s recommendation, to allow me the honour of making an index to his last work, and of seeing it through the press.”

“I grieve,” said Lady Fathom, “that he has forgotten his appointment; but you will find him at the British Museum, which perhaps will suit you as well.”

“Madam, I will have the honour of seeking

my patron there!" said Mc. Peevish, bowing to the ground and slinking out.

"And you, Sir," said Lady Fathom to Fitzplagiar, "may I ask your business?"

"I am a poor poet, my Lady——"

"Very poor!" said Spight, in an audible aside.

"And I am here, my Lady, to implore your Ladyship to allow me to dedicate to you a new poem I have written, called 'The Pleasures of Pain!'"

"Take my advice, and change the title," said Lady Fathom, kindly taking out of her purse a five pound note; "I shall be happy to patronize your book under a more auspicious name. So accept at once, I beg, my subscription and my hint!"

"Madam! ten thousand thanks! you shall be obeyed, my Lady; I am your Ladyship's most obedient humble servant!"

So saying, Fitzplagiar retired in a sort of cringing ecstasy.

“And you, Sir,” said Lady Fathom, turning to Spight, but (yielding unconsciously to the influence a clever and sarcastic countenance always has,) her voice was more courteous, her manner more polite—“has Sir Noah forgotten an appointment with you too, Sir?”

“My name, Madam!” said Spight, taking the chair she half proffered, and evading a direct answer, “is Devereux (he sunk the Spight); I am, by profession, a mental anatomist—in short, a critic!—a reviewer!”

“Indeed!” said Lady Fathom, a little awed; “and you have business with Sir Noah?”

“I am here,” said Spight, “to offer to announce the publication of a treatise, with which, I understand, Sir Noah is about to enlighten the world—to introduce it to the public with preparatory eulogies, and boundless commendatory paragraphs.”

“Have you, then, seen the work, Sir?”

“No Madam,” said Spight; “that is not necessary.”

"Then," asked Lady Fathom, in surprise, "what would you praise it for?"

"Your Ladyship is doubtless a novice in these matters," said Spight, who, like Rochefoucault, took a bitter pleasure in making all motives seem mean and interested—"what I will praise it for, do you ask?—for a consideration."

"Such a proposal, Sir," said Lady Fathom, with honest scorn, "deserves no consideration. Sir Noah will dispense, I am sure, with the purchased praise of such a mere puffing machine as you would make your review. A critic is a judge, and, like his brethren on the bench, should return no verdict unsanctioned by justice and patient investigation."

So saying, Lady Fathom bowed stiffly, and walked into her boudoir.

When she was gone, Spight stole gently up to Captain Fitzopal. "Sir," he said, "you have perhaps discovered that, like Talleyrand, I, in a general way, use words to disguise rather than to reveal my feelings. My recent explanation is a

mere ruse, a cloak; you and your interests have called me here. I have some very important communications to make to you; they concern Miss Castleton. You will marvel at a stranger's wish to serve you; but your "Songs of the Sentiments" made me your admirer, and ~~a~~ injury I once unintentionally allowed to be done you, made me your friend. Miss Castleton——"

"Is she in London then?" asked Fitzopal, not at all surprised that his merits should awaken a romantic wish to serve him in any one.

"Of that," said Spight, "when we can converse more at ease!"

"When and where, my good Sir?" said Fitzopal.

"This evening, at the Clarence Club. Farewell."

"*Au revoir*, then," said the Captain, hastening to the boudoir, having first rung the bell for Trueman to shew out his new ally.

"Now," thought Spight, as he moved slowly out, "will I mislead that insolent popinjay

about the heiress, and turn her little romantic pastoral into a tragedy for him. And as to you, my lady, you too shall feel the Hornet's sting ! A woman who parades an interest in any man but her husband, is the most defenceless of human beings ; she loses her natural shield, and becomes a mark for every shaft. Come, come, Sir Popinjay ! with your haughty, aristocratic belief that I was all eagerness to serve you, you shall learn. young whipper, that no one ever pinched the hornet without a sharp sting in return. Now for an impromptu on that subject," he added, taking out his note-book, and leaning against a lamp post.

Men should beware who play with sharp-edged tools,
So says the proverb, and they're fools who scorn it;
But I say this, that they are greater fools,
Who spar with Spight and irritate the Hornet.

Pleased with his epigram, Spight hurried along ; and Captain Fitzopal had determined on an explanation of some kind with Lady Fathom, when a party of morning visitors were shewn in, and as

soon as he could take his leave, Fitzopal, with outward calm, but inward impatience and vexation, left Lady Fathom to entertain her visitors and wonder why he went, and when he wouk return !

CHAPTER XI.

The conversation Lady Fathom had had with her cousin, before the arrival of Messrs. Devereux Spight and his protégés, had caused an unwonted tumult in the innocent heart of the young wife. But the very delight she took in listening to his impassioned words, seemed to warn her there was danger in their fascination, and with an instinct of propriety and dignity, we have seen that she withdrew.

All the impulses of her heart were pure and good, and a better education, an education founded on Christian, not on worldly principles,

would have made Ada a model for womankind. But there was little of good about her but what Nature had bestowed. A heartless mother, and an artificial, time-serving governess, had not planted one good seed in her young heart, and it was lucky that those which seemed born with her, had taken root so deeply, that nothing could eradicate them. No training could make her artful, no advice could make her think or feel wrongly, though it might make her act so. She was very beautiful, and she knew it; but she could not be trained into availing herself of that beauty to advance herself or to dethrone others. She married Sir Noah Fathom, not from any mean ambition, petty cupidity, or vile calculation of her own, but because she was by nature obedient, dutiful, timid, and sensitive; and the idea that her cousin, who had never actually made overtures to her, would be forbidden the house on account of her predilection for him, so alarmed her pride and delicacy, that had her mother and Miss Golightly studied for years, they could not

have hit upon a more powerful inducement to Ada to comply with their wishes. Adolphus, she thought, as she wept bitterly, would not only fancy that she loved him, but would believe that she had misconstrued his attentions, and with unmaidenly forwardness had boasted of a love which he had never professed! As she repeated this to herself again and again, and dwelt on all her mother had said, of the certainty of his admiration and friendship for her as Lady Fathom, her dislike to the match proposed to her, faded into indifference; and after marriage, gratitude, habit, and that fondness of which all good young female hearts are full, made her an affectionate and dutiful wife; but from impulse, not principle; for though she had heard much from Lady Revel of a wife's power, and how she should *manage* always to have her own way, she had never heard anything of her duty, her devotion, and her tenderness for him, who had chosen her from all the world of women, to be a help meet for him.

When Ada so resolutely left her cousin, after,

in words of such artful eloquence, he had described first love, and the lover worthy of her, a miserable feeling of desolation, of discontent, and of hopeless regret, stole into her heart. She hastened to her own room, her tears fell, she scarce knew why, and throwing herself back in her chair, she pressed her hands on her eyes to shut out the image of her cousin's dark and tearful gaze, and his pale cheeks. When she withdrew them, her glance fell on a portrait of Sir Noah Fathom, with his auburn wig, his quizzical air, and his kind old clever face; and Ada was ashamed of the feeling with which she turned away from those eyes, which had never met hers, but with kindness and love. At this moment Ada was roused by a knock at her door. It was little Noah's nurse; she came to say that Master Noah was very restless and uneasy, and though she was sure he must be very sleepy, nothing she could do could get him to sleep.

The young mother, pale with alarm, and a thousand maternal fears chasing all other emo-

tions, rushed to her nursery, and little Noah, who had been crying till he saw her, smiled a faint smile and stretched out his arms to her. Ada took him, and felt, as she pressed him to her bosom, as if he alone atoned for any sacrifice ; and when he laid his fevered cheek on her bosom and fell into a sweet sleep, she almost fancied that the alarm she had felt was sent as a just punishment for her sinful discontent.

When at length she placed him, still sleeping soundly, in his cot, and remembered how rude her long absence would appear to her cousin, she hastened down-stairs, but in an altered mood, and resolved directly he broached the dangerous subject which had so disturbed her, to forbid it peremptorily and for ever.

We have seen that chance and impatience prevented any further private conversation on that day, and Lady Fathom was certainly, after dinner, feeling very lonely without her cousin, while Sir Noah was engaged in his Museum. When paying a visit to the nursery, she found

her child very restless and feverish; and a medical man having been sent for, to her horror she heard he was suffering from inflammation of the lungs.

CHAPTER XII.

Poor Ada! she had now to undergo the sharpest trial of her young life—a life which had been hitherto so unclouded, and so free from real care and sorrow, that she was astounded at her first insight into the nature of misery and her own power of suffering. The progress of disease is so frightfully rapid in infancy, that by the time the young mother had watched two nights by her darling's little bed, from being only rather ailing, he was in imminent danger; her terror, her despair, were awful to behold, when first in a calm, professional manner, the

most eminent physician of the day, gave her to understand that there was but little hope. In spite of all her prayers, her entreaties, and (in her unjudicious anguish) her bribes to him to stay, he somewhat stiffly told her that the lives of two *adults* depended on his attendance that night, and then he resolutely departed.

Aia for some time gave way to a despair which seemed to partake of the nature of frenzy: —but while she sobbed, and tore her hair, and beat her breast, now throwing herself on the floor, and anon rushing wildly from room to room, all quietly her little one seemed to await the hour of doom. He had been much excited and very fretful, but now he lay breathing, it is true, with a horrible difficulty, and occasionally clutching his bed-clothes, but taking no notice of his mother or of any one around him, and occasionally murmuring to himself the only words he could lisp: "Poo ba-bee, poo dea ba-bee!"

These words he uttered in such a plaintive,

self-pitying tone, that they drew tears from every one who heard them. Sir Noah, whenever he could be made aware of what was going on, sobbed in helpless distress over his little darling; but he had been so long an Antiquarian, and so recently a Father, that often he lost sight of the latter character in the former, and even while watching by little Noah's cot, was plunged in reveries, in which he would almost unconsciously steal away to his studio, and there forget he "ever had a child."

This was so irritating, so incomprehensible, so maddening to the excited and all-engrossed mother, that fretful from sleepless nights and anxious days, she grew impatient of his presence in the nursery at all, and what at first she had sought as a solace, she began to dread as an additional evil. Her great natural and habitual gentleness alone prevented her showing some temper, when Sir Noah began to examine an old fossil, with eyes half-blinded by the tears he had been shedding for his child.

Poor Ada had no comforter in this her first and horrible anguish. A canting hireling nurse, and an imitative nursery-maid, whom she had herself caught snoring loudly at the most critical hour, administered no comfort, by their mock sympathy and sham devotion, to a mother's heart, so full of real misery and wild terror. Individual respect, and the habits of servitude, prevented their complaining of the want of their rest and their meals, but Ada saw through all their "blessid hangills!" and "suffering cherubims!" that their souls were in their tea-pot, and their hearts at the servants' supper-table; and while the child they professed to worship, lay gasping and panting on what seemed to be its bed of death, Ada saw them thankfully and eagerly accept her permission to go down-stairs to tea, and thence to bed, till she required their services, and chose to summon them.

Poor creature! it was a relief to her, to be free to kneel, and weep, and pray, unwatched, by her little darling's bed. Sir Jasper Ormsby, (the

leading physician of the day,) had, at her earnest entreaty, met Sir Jemmy Jessamy and Dr. Mc. Gruff in consultation over her poor child, and when taking their tone from Sir Jasper, (in a sort of medical etiquette, and deference to him as the oldest and most popular practitioner,) they had all declared the case hopeless, and united with him in ordering some neutral remedies, meant rather to pacify and occupy the mother than to benefit the child, Ada had felt that God only could save her darling, and that there was indeed no help in man.

However, the canting old nurse happening either to remember or invent a similar case cured by an obscure quack, living in Tottenham Court Road (by the bye, a great patron and employer of this same nurse)—Ada, like the drowning man, who catches at a straw, had urged Sir Noah, with many tears, to go in search of this man, and to bring him, if possible, back with him. Sir Noah had set out full of his mission, but meeting at the corner of the street with Vanderhüm-

bügger, who was always on the watch for him, he had invited the German into his carriage, and in a dispute on a fossil which the Doctor produced, he had forgotten all about his child, and had driven to the Doctor's lodgings to consult some authority on the subject.

It was about five o'clock when Sir Noah set out in search of Mr. Whisk, and Ada was counting the hours, nay, the very minutes, till he should return.

“Oh, that I had a mother that would come to me! that could feel for me, advise me!” sobbed poor Ada, as she thought she saw a death-like contraction in her little one's features. For one moment, as a sort of forlorn hope, she thought of sending to her mother; but when she remembered that she had never taken any interest even in her own infants, and had not been present at the death of her own last-born (whom Ada could just remember,) she gave up the thought with a burst of anguish and desolation.

Captain Fitzopal had called every day, and

often twice a day, since Ada's seclusion. He called to inquire after the mother, not the child. He was earnest in his entreaties to see her, pestered her with billets, all about himself, his own loneliness, and his longing to behold her again. With the selfish egotism of passion, he bored her with messages, bouquets, and notes, at a time when she had almost forgotten his very existence, or when, if he did recur to her tortured mind in her lonely night-watch, it was with a vague sense of self-reproach for her vanity in their recent intercourse, and a horrible but fleeting fancy that her child's peril was a punishment for the pleasure she had taken in his flattery and his devotion.

Poor Adolphus! his bouquets withered on the nursery tables, his notes were unopened, his messages unanswered; and, irritated and jealous, he resolved to leave the ungrateful Ada to remember him at her leisure, and to set himself seriously to work to win the Heiress.

As for Major Smiley, he too was much affected

by the loss of Ada's society ; for it had become the elixir of life to him. All calculator as he was, it would have been hard for him to say what price he would not gladly pay, to have her again, with her peerless bloom, her bewitching *naïveté*, her *piquante* humour, and her ineffable grace, making a sort of fairy land of every scene she brightened by her presence. If he was willing to pay such and such a sum to have his ear gratified by the daughters of music, or his eye pleased by the agile graces of the ballet-dancers, what was it not worth to him, to have every sense gratified at once, and that to the highest pitch ? No Prima Donna had to his ear such notes as Ada ; no ballet Queen had half her grace in the dance—a grace so chaste and so poetical, that it seemed to satisfy the mind as much as the eye. Then her enchanting converse, her inexplicable beauty, and above all, the passion new, wild, lawless, and entralling, which, felt in the maturity of manhood for the first time, gave a mystic and intoxicating charm to every look, every tone of Ada's.

But, well the man of calculation knew the folly, the madness, the almost idiotey of intruding himself and his feelings on the pure heart bursting over the death-bed of her first-born. He pondered, he calculated, he considered, and arrived at length at the conclusion, that if there was one tortuous path by which his evil steps could reach the young mother's heart, it was by some signal service done and many fond attentions paid to her little idol. He had, then, when inquiring (always twice a day) made the child the object of all his questions, and he had often moistened the young mother's eyes by sending in some little toy, certain to touch her heart, though it awoke no attention in the suffering child.

Silently these devices had worked their way, and from rather disliking him than not, Ada began to feel an interest and a kindness towards him.

It was the day of the consultation—the day in which it seemed to the disconsolate mother, as if three heartless pedants had calmly doomed her

idolized child to death—the day on which she had sent Sir Noah for Mr. Whisk, of Tottenham Court Road—and on which, unwilling her useless, canting attendants should watch her impatient anguish, she had sent them where they wished to be, among their kindred menials at the servants' tea-table; and she was alone—ghastly pale, save where scalding tears seemed to have blistered her cheeks—bowed, (she, naturally so stately)—visibly shrunken (for a week of real anguish, tells on any face and form)—and, as if in mockery of that misery which levels all mothers, whether of the palace or the hovel, her dress was a rich full-trimmed evening dress, in which she had been arrayed when first her child was taken ill—a low dress with short sleeves, and which she had had no energy or heart to change; and which Sir Noah was too absent, and her servants too indifferent, to induce her to alter; but over which, in the chilliness of night watching and terror, she had drawn the coarse shawl of the nurse, which chanced to be at hand. Her

hair, which when her boy was first pronounced in danger, had been richly and modishly braided, and dressed with flowers, now hung in long plaits on her shoulders ; she had dashed away the flowers, but the ringlets fell in tangled masses round her face ; no smoothing touch had they received during her heart's agony. And yet, in spite of all this disorder, never did Ada look so touching as in this dreadful season of her lonely watch. The evening sun sent its red and slanting beams into the room, lighting the golden masses of the mourner's hair, the coarse plaid of the shawl, and the rich satin folds of the dress. One white arm, on which a forgotten bracelet was still clasped, was passed under the feverish cheek of the little sufferer, who lay still and silent as the dead ; and Ada knelt by his little bed, and drew that burning cheek to her cold bosom, visible in its rich satin covering, where the shawl gave way to her extended arm ; and soiled, and crumpled, and unheeded on the ground, swept the rich folds of delicate rose-colour, and a picture of

more touching misery no mind can conceive. A very Magdalén she looked, kneeling and weeping, with those redundant unbound tresses of gold, and that rich form and face of beauty. Silently the mother's tears fell, save when a little low moan or gasp changed them for a sob. So engrossed was she by her grief, that she did not hear a step in the room, and knew not how long she had been watched, when she felt her hand gently touched, and a low, deep voice said—“Ada! Lady Fathom! look up—I cannot bear to see you thus!”

And Ada started to her feet; a sense of anger and annoyance at this intrusion firing her eyes, and flushing her face, she looked coldly and proudly round; but meeting the eyes of Major Smiley fixed upon her, swimming in tears, her resentment vanished, the unwonted sympathy touched a chord in her heart; she turned away, and, sobbing, hid her face with one hand, while she gently extended the other to Major Smiley.

Major Smiley pressed it gently and reveren-

tially, as one would a saint's ; and then Ada, still sobbing, said :

“ Why are you here ? how and when did you come ? ”

“ I came,” he said, drawing near the bed, “ because I think I can comfort you.”

Ada shook her head, and a fresh gush of tears came forth.

“ I intended only to wait in the library to see Sir Noah, or write him a note, but feeling sure I could do more good by seeing *you*, I found my way up here. I knocked twice gently, fearing to wake your child——”

“ He will soon sleep to wake no more ! ” almost shrieked the poor mother, flinging herself again on her knees by the bed, thoughtless of herself, her visitor, of aught but her child.

“ No, no ! ” said Major Smiley, trying to raise her ; “ I believe he will not die ; let me look at him.”

“ They have doomed him ! he must die ! ” she groaned.

"I know the licensed pedants have given him up—so much the better; those who are not such fools are thus free to save him. Listen, Ada! I have seen a child of the same age, and in the same disease, so given over, and I have seen him saved!"

"And live?" shrieked Ada, springing to her feet; "and can you save him? Oh, Angel! oh, mercy! oh, save him! and I will bless, I will die to reward you!"

And the excitement of her feelings, acting on her exhausted frame, Ada wept and laughed alternately, with tears and laughter over which she had no power, and which the experienced Major recognised as a fit of hysterics.

Quietly Major Smiley poured out a glass of water, and held a salt bottle, which stood on the table, to Ada's nostrils; but, above all, he urged her to be calm, saying, in low impressive tones, "Every moment, at such a stage is precious, Lady Fathom, and nothing can be done till you are

calm, and well, and able to co-operate with me."

At these words, he looked earnestly into her face, and for a moment he was startled at the convulsive effort she made to be calm. Tightly she clasped his extended hand with one of hers, motioning with the other for more water. It was a little time before the spasmodic contraction of her throat allowed her to swallow it; but at length she did so; and turning to him, she said, with a smile which almost made him weep, so wan and ghastly did it seem: "I am calm now —now hasten to tell me what to do!"

"In a small, poor street close by," said Major Smiley, talking rapidly, out of mercy to her impatience, "there is a poor young mother, whose child, a few months ago, was dying like yours; like yours the Doctors gave it up, and she saved it herself. I know her well, she is (and he affected to look unwilling to imply aught in his own praise) one whom I knew better off, a poor pensioner of mine; in short, let her come to you,

and bring out her the same remedies she used with her own boy ; I saw her box now, and she is sanguine as to the result."

"Do ! oh, go and fetch her ! in mercy go !" cried Ada, whose countenance had been gradually brightening with hope as he spoke, and whose flushed cheek and clasped hands revealed her sanguine nature.

And Major Smiley waited not to be urged, but saying, "I will return with her," he hurried away.

In about half an hour, which to Ada seemed half an age, Major Smiley returned.

The well-bred butler only slightly elevated his eye-brows, when he saw the Major (whom he fancied still in the library, where he had shewn him) in a hackney coach, with a young and pretty woman.

"This young person," said the Major, haughtily, "is here by appointment with Lady Fathom ; I know her Ladyship is in the nursery—I will introduce the young woman myself."

Awed, as servants always are, by the air of command and the assumption of authority, the butler bowed with a courtly grace, and showed the way to the nursery ; but hastened down-stairs to the servants' tea-table, where native vulgarity taking the place of acquired dignity, he proceeded to alarm the nursery-maid, by a hint that some one was come to "put her nose out of joint" and "to step into her shoes ;" and then he proceeded to nod, and wink, and shake his head about this sudden intimacy of the Major and his Lady.

But while this was going on in the servants' hall, Ada, without a thought of self, of the Major, or of anything strange in his interference, was listening, with a changing cheek, a beating heart, and lips apart, to the young woman's account of her own child's illness and recovery. While her poor visitor felt the child's pulse, and examined his countenance, Ada would have fallen, so much did her knees tremble and her frame shake, had not the Major extended his arm to support her.

At length, in a sweet voice, but with a Scotch

mean, the girl said: "My Laddie! for a' that I can see, there's na' a pin to chuse between what yer bairn is, and what my ain was. The Doctor, a' Laddie, is scarce, ha' gien yours ower as weel as mine, an it canna harm the canny bairn jist to try sic like remedies, wi' whilk, and the gude God's blessing, I e'en saved my ain bairnie."

"There now," said Major Smiley, "I will leave you, Lady Fathom; but my heart will be with the darling little sufferer, and I shall be very anxious to know the result of my professor's skill."

Ada silently pressed his hand, and murmured, "God bless and reward you"—and the Major hastened away.

A bath, much hotter than any it had yet had, was the first remedy 'Janet Macauley,' (for such was the girl's name) ordered; she then covered the child's little chest with a blister so large, the mother shuddered to behold it, and gave it a strong dose of James's powders.

All this she did with so much confidence and

self-possession, that Lady Fathom felt almost inclined to rely upon her ; she did suggest, " He has already had one blister."

" Ah, I doot na' thot—a wee bit thing, the size o' a croon, and sa had my ain ! They ken na' the professors o' pheesic, they ken na', my Leddy, wha' strang is a strang bairn noorished like yours and mine at the mother's breast ; they fear to apply a strang remedy to a strang bairn wi' a strang disease, and there's na other worth the fashing onesel' aboot it. My Leddy, feel his loof ; if I dinna mistake, a wee damp has come out."

Ada, with a thrill of joy, detected a slight moisture in the hitherto parched palms. For some time the nurse and nursemaid, jealous and fearful, remained to watch and pry ; but when they had discovered that this young woman was called in because she had saved the life of a child of her own, in the same disease, they grew sleepy, and were glad to be ordered by Lady Fathom, after having put everything in order, to lie down in the next room until they were wanted.

All night the poor mother and Janet watched by the little bed; and, by degrees, a profuse perspiration came out upon the hitherto burning skin; the blister rose, and as it rose, the child began to breathe more freely. The pulse, from having been incalculably rapid and wiry, became faint and slow. The little darling, who could hardly gasp, now sighed deeply several times; he opened his eyes, no longer on fire with fever and excitement, but large, languid, and pellucid; and pillowing his cheek on his little arm, in an attitude of comfort usual with him in health, and therefore rapture to his mother to behold, he curled himself round into a cosy sleep—the first natural, refreshing sleep he had had since his illness.

“For a’ the warld, my Leddy,” said Janet, with Scotch enthusiasm, “jist like my ain bairn—as like as twa peas. He’ll be himsel’ yet, my Leddy; and when he wakes up, see if he does na’ ask for a bite and sup.”

“Oh, God! grant he may,” said Ada, throwing

herself on her knees. And on her knees, and for the most part in earnest prayer, Ada remained till he awoke. And when he did awake, what joy, what rapture! he stretched his little arms out to her; with a faint smile, he lisped, “Ma-ma! poo Babie! dea Babie!” and finally cried, “Ma-ma! te-to”—which was well known to mean tea and toast, his nurse’s favourite repast, and of which he often surreptitiously partook.

And he drank deeply of the weak tea, and ate a morsel of the toast, and then his blister being dressed, his linen changed, and his bed remade, he again fell fast asleep, and the morning sun looked in upon a child saved, and a mother weeping for joy; and, persuaded by Janet, (who promised to continue her watch) the mother lay down by the recovered treasure of her heart, and fell into a deep and all-healing sleep.

CHAPTER XIII.

When Ann awoke to the delightful consciousness that her boy, still asleep, was breathing freely by her side, and that the darling whom she had almost mourned as dead, was restored to life and her, a feeling of pious gratitude towards God, and of affectionate thankfulness towards those who seemed to be his immediate agents, filled her heart.

After her fervent sacrifice of thanks and praise to the Giver of all good, she began to ponder, with awe and amazement, on the wonderful manner in which her child's cure had been effected.

She looked from the bed on which she had stretched herself; the room was in very neat order, the light partly shrouded, a fire burning briskly, and a kettle of water boiling merrily, and asleep in a large arm-chair by the fire, was the girlish and interesting Janet, whom Ada now gazed upon through her tears.

She was a tall, slender, and elegantly made girl, with hair of the lightest flaxen, delicate features, and a complexion so very fair, as to be almost unearthly. There was an unmistakeable look of care and sorrow on her brow and on her lips; and while Ada watched her, she remarked that heavy sighs, which were almost sobs, escaped her breast. Her dress was poor and worn, her stockings black cotton, and her shoes were of a rustic make, and had buckles in them.

“Poor thing! she does not look more than sixteen! and to think she is a mother! I wonder why she seems so sad,” thought Ada. In her own inexperience, Ada did not suspect, that in the very fact of her being a mother, might lie the

cause of her sadness. "I wonder how long she has been married," thought Ada. It did not occur to her to suspect that she had never been married at all.

A slight noise Ada made in moving, awoke Janet from her brief repose. Finding Lady Fathom's glance fixed upon her, the colour rushed to her brow, cheek, and bosom, and Ada perceived that the eyes which she hastily withdrew, were, in spite of her flaxen hair, wild, large, and black, and that the expression of her features was frank and resolute, though an excessive timidity seemed to affect her at that moment.

Entirely engrossed by her child's peril, and her new hopes, Ada the night before had taken no notice of her strange visitor's appearance; but now she thought her singularly interesting and uncommon in person and manner, and she began to feel a woman's curiosity to know her story.

"I fear you must be very tired," said Lady

Fathom, as she rose from the bed, and approaching Janet, held out her hand.

“I’m used to waking and watching, my Leddy,” said Janet, just touching the proffered hand.

“Indeed! why you must be very young.”

“I’m na’auld,” said Janet.

“How long have you been married?” asked Lady Fathom.

Janet looked at her with a searching and fiery glance.

“It’s a soobject that’s distressing and distastefu’ to me, my Leddy.”

“Poor thing!” said the innocent Ada, thinking that she had lost her husband—“so young too; well, but you have your boy left.”

“I ha’ thot blessing yet,” said Janet; “and that reminds me, he maun be greeting for his mither, and his wee bit parridge, the canny bairn! See, my Leddy, the water boils; if ye will tak a cup o’ tay—and then ye must e’en let me gang my ways to my ain dear wean.”

“Well, take some breakfast with me,” said Lady Fathom, ringing for her maid, “and tell me how I am to call you, and how I can best requite the great service you have done me to-night.”

“My name,” said the girl, blushing deeply, “is Janet Macauley. As for a reward, I am a mither, wi’ a mither’s heart, and to see your bairnie saved is reward eno’ for me.”

“But still, Janet, for my sake, let me ease my heart, by some little token of gratitude.”

And Ada took a note from her purse.

“Na, na!” said Janet, putting it away, though with the reluctance of one who feared to be tempted. “I maunna, I canna accept o’ siller as a gift, but I’m na that rich nor that prood, Leddy, that I would na’ gladly earn a treefie. I’m a gude hand wi’ the needle and the shears, and sa, if ye hae at ony time a few linens to mak, or ony odd canny job to do, I’ll thank you to remember me.”

So saying, she took out of her pocket a bit

of crumpled paper with her address:—"Janet Macauley, Sempstress, Paradise Row, St. James's Mews."

Urged by Ada, she took one cup of tea, and a bit of bread, standing, and then reminding Ada of her ain greeting bairn at hame, she touched with her lips the wan hand of the still sleeping little Noah, and hastily putting on an old bonnet and a mean shawl, with a graceful courtesy to Lady Fathom, Janet hastened away.

"I am certain," thought Lady Fathom, "there is something unusual in that girl's history—some mystery, some romance, connected with her fate: but I will ascertain from Major Smiley who and what she is, and how I can best serve and befriend her.

At this moment Lady Fathom looked into the glass; it was the first time she had seen herself in it, since her boy's danger. She was startled, so wild, so haggard, so insane, did she appear to herself.

As little Noah still slept calmly on, she sum-

moned her maid, and soon made a graceful and refreshing toilet, and during its progress, inquiring for the first time after Sir Noah, she learnt, somewhat to her alarm, that he had not been home that night.

She then recalled the important message on which she had sent him, in search of Mr. Whisk of Tottenham Court Road, and she was beginning to feel some alarm lest, in his absence and mental abstraction, he should have rushed into any danger, when a note was brought her. It was as follows :—

“ My own sweet little wife ! Pride and darling of my heart ! how can I hope you will forgive me ? You know I set out to fetch Mr. Fisk. Well, at the corner of the square I met Vanderhümbügger ; I asked him into the carriage to beguile the way, for I was full of grief for our darling boy. Unluckily he had with him several extraordinary specimens. We got into a dispute on the nature of one of them—I forgot my message, and consented to adjourn to his house to submit

it to a chemical process. It engrossed us both ; but I was properly punished, for while we were bending over the crucible in which the specimen was placed, it exploded in our faces, causing me several very painful scalds and burns ; and what is far more important and horrible to relate, totally depriving Vanderhümbügger of sight ! I am confined to a bed in his house, and constantly attended by a surgeon ; but he, I grieve to say, will see no medical man. He is, as he says, blinded in my service, and of course it is my duty to provide for him handsomely, which shall be done: It is an awful thing to have been the means, however unintentionally, of depriving a fellow-creature of the greatest of blessings—sight ; and all I can do, will seem a poor compensation. You will see that I have been obliged to avail myself of Miss Vanderhümbügger's pen, to send you this, for my own right hand is disabled. Hoping to hear a good account of yourself and our dear boy, I am ever, dearest Ada, your all-devoted husband.

"As I hear Mr. Fisk is merely an illiterate quack, I send my present attendant, a man of real skill and experience, to prescribe for our darling, whom may God, in his great mercy, restore."

"Written for NOAH FATHOM,

By LOUISELIE VANDERHUMBUGGER."

Lady Fathom saw by the nature of this epistle, which was by far the most connected and comprehensible she had ever received from her husband, that his amanuensis (Miss Louiselie Vanderhümbügger) had herself contrived thus to elucidate and condense what, Ada felt sure, must have been dictated in a very involved, abstracted, and rambling manner. She felt very anxious about poor Sir Noah, and determined, if her darling awoke as much recovered as she expected he would, that she would drive in the afternoon to see her husband. She also resolved not to let any new Doctor interfere with her beloved boy, and she therefore dismissed him

with a polite message, signifying that her child was so much better she would not detain him one moment from Sir Noah, and his other patients ; and he, finding all remonstrance vain, very unwillingly went his way.

In the course of the day Sir Jasper Ormsby called, rather as a matter of courtesy than utility, for he fully expected to hear that his little patient was either dying or dead. His surprise at his sudden amendment was very great, though concealed by a skilfully mysterious and professional manner ; but the alteration in the mother amazed him even more than that in the child. He had judged Lady Fathom by her strange attire, her wild manner, and her almost incoherent language ; and putting all these together, he had decided that she was a pretty fool, with a touch of insanity. When he saw her calm, pale, dignified ; her hair, which he had beheld in such dishevelled masses, smoothly braided, and shining like a pheasant's breast, and her wild and gaudy attire exchanged for a morning dress, most neatly ele-

gant—he could scarcely conceal his surprise and admiration. And when, in a clear and frank manner, she explained to him what she had done, he was fain to acknowledge to himself that he had wronged her much.

He expressed much satisfaction at the result, while he strongly denounced the means, and entered into a learned argument to prove that they ought to have failed, and to have accelerated the little sufferer's fate. Ada listened patiently, remembering that every word brought him nearer to the end of his visit, and at length saw him depart with great satisfaction, for even he was obliged to own that the child was doing well, and that there seemed no danger of a relapse.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, Major Smiley (who now seemed to consider himself a privileged visitor to the nursery) knocked at the door. Ada was sitting by her child, who was awake, languid and pale, but all fever gone, and playing with the rings on her fingers and the chain round her neck.

Ada received Major Smiley with a warmth and gratitude which sent the colour to her cheek and the tears to her eyes; but the calculator knew the source of her emotion, and it gave him no pleasure, except as in some degree cementing the intimacy he so wished to establish.

He brought some toys, which immediately attracted the little invalid's attention, and caused a faint smile to steal over his little wan face. And as he stretched out his wasted hand to play with them, Ada again looked at Major Smiley through the softest tears. And then he sate with her by the nursery fire, in an apparent intimacy, which years would not have warranted, but which the events of a few hours had rendered perfectly natural.

She questioned him about Janet and her history, but in a manner which shewed that no suspicion of any kind had found a place in her guileless heart. He told her that Janet was a girl of good family, her father being a respectable Scotch farmer of ancient race—that she had been

the belle of the village, and the pet of her family—that at fifteen she had formed an acquaintance with a wild and reckless character, but handsome and fascinating—that her father had forbidden him the house, but not before he had made sure of Janet's heart; she married him privately, and eloped with him. He had soon deserted her; but it was supposed in some of his wild courses had met with his death; and Janet had a child of two years old to maintain, and a spirit too proud to allow her to accept of the assistance of friends, or seek the relief of the parish.

"I have a peculiar facility," said Major Smiley, with a modest smile, "for finding out want and misery in her most secret haunts—and for nearly two years I have had my eye on this unhappy girl, to save her from actual despair. But it is only in the most delicate way that I can get her to accept of any assistance. She has made herself quite ill, by constant and miserably paid needle-work; and remembering your once expressing a wish for a young person in your

nursery rather above the common, and able in time to act as nursery governess to your little darling, I have been thinking this poor Janet would be the very thing you require."

"Oh, exactly ; but what would she do with her own poor child ?"

"I dare say it will be painful to her to part with him ; but she is a girl of sense. The close air of her confined and unhealthy lodgings, has, I believe (more than once), caused him dangerous illnesses. I will see her on the subject, and I think I can convince her that some kind healthy cottager's wife, with a garden, a cow, and country air, will do more for her child than she can do. At any rate she can try it for a few months.

Ada sighed for poor Janet and her child, but the Major's arguments seemed convincing, and she longed to have the trustworthy and superior Janet with her own darling, and so she commissioned Major Smiley to ask Janet to come rather as companion and nursery governess to her boy, than as a servant, and proposed a remunera-

tion which was handsome even for the lady of the wealthy Sir Noah.

Major Smiley then took his leave ; the result of his many calculations being a few maxims, of which one was, never to be *de trop* anywhere. And Ada, with a heart at ease about her darling, who was improving hourly, but with a pale cheek, and a languid pulse, proceeded to Vanderhümbügger's lodgings, to ascertain the real state of Sir Noah, and the unfortunate antiquarian.

She was received by Miss Louiselie Vanderhümbügger, a stout German damsel, with a large white face, small chines eyes, flaxen hair, strained off a broad clever forehead, and gathered in an immense braid behind—a neatly fitting dress of dark merino, a plain collar and cuffs, and a pretty foot and ankle, jauntily set off by a short full skirt, a very white stocking, and pretty black shoe.

Ada did not like her, though she evidently tried to please ; but there was a mixture of self-possession and cunning about her, far from *prépossessing*. She spoke too, of her father's blindness,

and the agonies he suffered, with very unfilial resignation, but affected great sympathy with Sir Noah's comparatively trifling accident, and the expenses her father's blindness would of course entail on his patron. She then, with rather a patronising air, asked if Lady Fathom would like to see Sir Noah; and led the way to his room, as if she were the privileged intruder there.

Poor Sir Noah sate propped up in a curtainless bed, in a very comfortless, half-furnished room, without shutters or blinds. A hideous white cotton night-cap, with a large nodding tassel, was drawn down to his eyebrows, and two plaisters and a poultice, held up by a red cotton handkerchief under his chin, and tied with two long perpendicular ends on the top of his head, gave a ludicrous frightfulness to his appearance; the sublime was quite sunk in the ridiculous. Sir Noah's hands were wrapped up in poultices and cloths, which made them two round bundles; but in spite of all these impediments to study, a large old folio was propped up, so that he could

read it, and several other books and specimens were strewn over the bed.

The poor old fellow received his wife and her good news with tears of joy, and was proceeding to give a rambling, indistinct account of how the accident had happened, when a succession of unearthly shrieks and howls made Ada start and turn pale.

“It is only my poor fader,” said Louiselie, closing the door; “my moder is dressing his wounds; he will not have a doctor—he has no faith in doctors!”

“Oh!” said Ada, clasping her hands, and faint and pale with horror, as even through the closed doors his yells were heard—“do go to your poor father, and ask him what we can do to comfort him, and beg him, from me, to see some good oculist; tell him my carriage is here, and I will at once take him to Alexander. Who knows, but his sight might yet be saved—one eye perhaps, if not both.”

“Ah, do go, my dear!” said Sir Noah, “and

at any rate find out if we can comfort him at all. I don't believe he'll see Alexander, or any of them; but perhaps if his mind were at ease about his affairs, he'd get better."

Louiselie went with apparent reluctance, observing that her father, always very passionate, was so violent in his present agony, that both her mother and herself feared to enter the room; as, being unable to see, he threw things about at random, and one large book had stunned her poor mother, and given her a black eye, which must excuse her appearing.

For some time, pale and trembling, Lady Fathom listened to a succession of howls, shrieks, and groans, which seemed occasionally interspersed with violent German oaths, for the words 'der Teufel,' and 'Donner,' and 'Blitzen,' were often repeated.

At length Louiselie reappeared, and said, with German calm, that her father was worse—that he would not hear of any advice—that he was convinced he should not live long, and wished to die

in his native place—that, therefore, whatever the patron, benefactor, and friend, in whose cause he had lost his sight meant to settle on him, and his bereaved and ruined family after him, should be done at once; and that such provision being legally secured, he wished privately to set out with his wife and daughter for his father-land, there to die, a victim blinded in the cause of friendship and science.

All this Louiselie delivered without emotion, Sir Noah resolved instantly to send for his lawyer; and as Lady Fathom rose to return to her darling, he begged her to call at his solicitor's on her way home, and intreat him either to go himself, or send some competent person, to draw up the necessary agreement.

Lady Fathom then took her leave, and while driving through Gower Street in search of Sir Noah's solicitor, she chanced to look up to an open window, where she saw a beautiful young brunette bending over an embroidery frame—a stately, actress-like woman in a turban, handsome

and forward, and evidently flirting with a young man, whom, although she only saw a bit of his profile, and the back of his figure, Ada instantly recognised as her cousin, Adolphus Fitzopal.

The solicitor's house being nearly opposite the Misses Evergreens', Ada, her veil down, and leaning back in the carriage, watched the trio; she saw that, while apparently flirting with the turbaned lady, Adolphus was leaning most unnecessarily on the chair of the embroideress, whose colour rose when, as if by accident, he touched her arm, and whose downcast eyes seemed, to Ada's fancy, eloquent of modest tenderness and maiden shame, at advances she would not encourage and could not resent.

"I wonder who and what they are!" thought Ada; "he is evidently courting the older for the sake of the younger lady. Well, he seems happy; and she, though so dark, is very lovely. No wonder he has called less often lately; but what is it to me? why should I care so much about it?"

What indeed is it to you, oh Ada? Have you not during your recent trial, voluntarily, and as a stoning sacrifice, relinquished the dangerous pleasure of your cousin's too fascinating attentions? did you not, while keeping your late hopeless and dreadful watch by your infant's couch, think with self-loathing of your late vain and engrossing delight in that cousin's flattery? did you not silently renounce so questionable a friend, as a platonic lover must be to a young wife? Is all so soon forgotten? Alas! alas! how many more tears must thou shed, how many more days and nights of anguish must thou know, before innocence shall rise to virtue! Poor Ada! his attentions were not half so dangerous to thy peace, as is this estrangement! He was unheeded while he wrote and called daily; but now! oh woman! woman! So jealous of thy empire!

Ada gives orders that when next Captain Pitsopal calls, he is to be admitted. She must let him know she is in his secret; she must find

out all about the pretty brunette! She must find out if he is indeed in love! Oh, daughter of Eve! Vanity and Curiosity thy tempters still!

CHAPTER XIV.

We have seen that Adolphus Fitzopal, suddenly deprived, by little Noah's dangerous illness, of the society of his fascinating cousin, was left pretty much to his own resources. In a general way, they were not to be despised, for, unlike most young Englishmen of fashion, he had pursuits which did not depend on the elements and the brute creation—music, painting, poetry, and many other intellectual and graceful employments, were at hand to save him from *ennui*; but, alas! in his present mood, he could find solace in none of them. He had accustomed himself to

the constant luxury and excitement of the companionship of one “he loved not wisely, but too well;” and he found, as all men do under similar circumstances, that life was a blank without it. Captain Fitzopal, though, alas! not a man of any strong principle or systematic goodness, was no cold sensualist, or calculating libertine; he never looked forward to any result, in his attentions to his cousin; he felt lonely and restless when away from her, and happy and animated in her presence. He did his utmost to please her, because her smiles were the sunshine of his very soul; but he never asked himself the terrible question, how was it to end? And his own heart would perhaps never have originated one evil thought; but it was a soil, alas! ready to receive the bad seed—and Major Smiley’s hints and sarcasms were the surest means of conveying it. Since Ada’s seclusion, Captain Fitzopal, lonely and irritable, had been in the very worst of ill humours. Her intense anxiety, her unspeakable wretchedness, and entire devotion to her child,

were things with which he had no sympathy; he mourned, but, like all egotists, for himself; he thought he was the most to be pitied, for not only he lost in Ada all that made life pleasant, or occupation interesting to him, but he had another great source of discomfort—he had long been in debt, and was beginning to be very seriously and constantly dunned.

Though Captain Fitzopal was not exactly an extravagant man in the common sense of the word, in the world of fashion, he was yet a man of expensive habits. He had a taste in antiques, pictures, sculpture, plants—was a patron of unappreciated genius—lady authors—young poetesses—musical debutantes, and unknown artists. Then his dress, his ‘turn out,’ all his appointments, without being costly, were in the best possible taste, and the best possible taste can only be obtained from the best sources, and at the best prices. Altogether, Captain Fitzopal, after a few months in London, found himself deeply in debt, and instead of Lady Fathom’s

daily billets, proposing this excursion, or that ball or concert, or better still, a morning in her studio, or of practice of music with her—long blueish-looking, wafered letters came with every post-man ; and disagreeable, vulgar-looking men began to call and to go away without leaving any message, except that they would call again.

All this made Captain Fitzopal extremely uncomfortable, angry with Ada, and miserable in himself ; he began to ponder on Miss Castleton, and to determine to marry her, and secure himself at once against a life of dunning or of self-denial. One or two of his correspondents had lately assumed so threatening an air, that Captain Fitzopal was obliged to condescend to evasions, subterfuges, and false promises. Some mysterious-looking men had called so often, under so many pretexts, and had once or twice so nearly obtained an interview with Captain Fitzopal, that aided by Vanille, his Swiss valet, he was reduced to pretend absence from London—to keep at home, or go out by stealth and on

Sundays—and, in short, fairly to be on his guard against the ~~ladies~~!

One day that, after vainly trying to occupy himself with an oil-painting he had in hand, and for the principal figure of which Adis had sat—and after vainly trying to finish, by himself, a French poem he had begun with her—Captain Fitzopal resolved to make one more effort to see his cousin, and then to repair to the club of Mr. Devereux (Spight), and obtain from him all the information he could on the subject of Miss Castleton, and her romantic devices.

Just as he had come to this conclusion, Major Smiley called upon him; and finding him, as he said, ‘a cup too low,’ prevailed on him to order a slight lunch, and to wind it up with a glass or two of Maraschino. Cheered by the society of an agreeable companion, and an enlivening repast, Captain Fitzopal began to open his heart, and Major Smiley of course to pour the seeming balm, but real poison, into his wounds.

“ My dear fellow !” he said, appearing affected —“ I had no idea you were so unhappy, upon my soul I had not ; I really had no notion you were so desperately in love !”

“ Nay, nay,” said Fitzopal, flinching, “ not actually in love—remember she is married !”

“ Pshaw ! what of that ? are you a girl, or a puritan, Fitz ? And married to that blind, idiotic, old quiz—and you so intimate too—so trusted by both !”

“ The very reason, Smiley, why I would not harbour a thought injurious to either.”

Major Smiley laughed, a little low, sarcastic, silent laugh—it galled Fitzopal.

“ Why do you laugh ?” he said.

“ Oh, only at my own folly ; I thought you were a man of the world, Fitzopal !”

“ And so I am ; but I am a man of honour, and of feeling too ; I suppose the characters are not inconsistent ?”

“ No, a man of the world may be a man of the world’s honour, but not of a quixotic, romantic

virtue. A man of the world would not refuse a challenge, or back out of a bet, or evade a debt of honour; but if he was in love with the prettiest person in the world, married against her will to an old fool, and certainly seeming to be as fond of her young cousin as any woman can appear to be of so very moral and immaculate a youth—why then— He being already received as her platonic lover—why certainly—”

“ Certainly what?—” asked Fitzopal, impatient of Smiley’s significant shrugs and looks. A loud knock startled both, and made Captain Fitzopal turn pale.

“ Some infernal dun, I doubt not!” he said; “ I hope Vanille will be on his guard.”

“ And what a glorious thing you are throwing away in that heiress,” said Smiley; “ do be advised—marry her off hand, and see about your fair cousin afterwards!”

“ Oh, but,” said Fitzopal, “ then if Fate ever released Ada, (and Sir Noah is very old,) think, Smiley, it would be too late—”

At this moment Vanille came up to say that a lady, fashionably dressed, and who insisted on seeing Captain Fitzopal, was at the door in a fly.

“A fly!” said Smiley; “what an obsolete idea; of course her object is concealment. I cannot see any lady, Vanille,” said Fitzopal; “say, your master is indisposed and keeps his room.”

“Not without cause!” said Smiley.

“I say, Vanille, is she young and pretty?”

“As far as I can see, Sir, through a very thick veil, and under a very close bonnet, she seems, though wrapped up closely, to have a very fine figure, and long black ringlets hanging on her shoulders.”

“Oh, do see her, Fitz! it may be a curious adventure; I’ll step into the next room, and share in the fun.”

“No, no, Vanille, do as I tell you; I have no spirit for the thing.”

“Well, let me personate you.”

"No, no, Smiley, if it is some silly creature trusting to my honour, and yielding to some insane passion, I would not so wound and injure her; but here comes Vanille again, and with a card."

Vanille came in trying not to look too conscious. On the card was written in pencil, "Lady Brown."

"Lady Brown!" said Fitzopal; "who can that be?"

"Lady Brown!" echoed Major Smiley; "why it must be the beautiful, the immaculate, the haughty Lady Brown, to be sure—wife of Sir Howard Brown! You sate next her, Fitz, at the Pemberton's, and, by George, her pew is next to Lady Fathom's; there, I dare say, she's watched you till she's fallen in love with you. Oh, these women, proud ones particularly—"

"What, that tall, beautiful Lady Brown, with long black hair, and looking scorn on all mankind?"

"The very same of course, Fitz; she now sits in an humble fly at your door, risking name and

fame for an ingrate who will not even grant her an interview. Now, Fitz, who knows the sex best? there's not one of them to be trusted; the least spark of love will thaw the reserve of the proudest, by George, when Lady Brown is found tripping!—*Nil desperandum* is my motto about them all! bravo! bravo! The less trouble one takes, the more sure one may make of them. Come now, you'll do very well, Fitz; do remember she's at the door all this time."

Fitzopal having arranged his hair and collar at the glass; and, aided by Vanille, exchanged his brocaded wrapper and slippers for a suitable attire, touched up his moustachios with black pomade—scented his handkerchief with 'bouquet d'amour'—hurried Major Smiley into the next room, and threw himself on a sofa, with a poem in his hand. Vanille hastened away to shew the Lady up-stairs.

Although Captain Fitzopal's heart took no part in this mysterious affair, yet vanity and the pride of conquest agitated him a little when Vanille

gently opened the door; and looking up from his book, he beheld a tall, stately figure, in flowing drapery, and perceived that the stranger covered her face with her handkerchief.

"Madam!" he said, rising, "do not fear; this honour makes Adolphus Fitzopal the humblest of your slaves, though the happiest of men!"

At these words, the stranger darted towards him—seized his arm with one hand, while with the other she presented a strip of paper. A hideous triumph spread over a face of masculine features, and coarse complexion, and in a hoarse voice the *soi disant* lady said, "Captain Fitzopal, in the Queen's name, I serve you with this copy of a writ, at the suit of Messrs. Glitter and Glare, Jewellers, New Bond Street. This"—and he touched another strip—"is the original."

For one moment Captain Fitzopal stood paralyzed; the next, the whole truth dawned upon him; the *soi disant* Lady Brown was a bailiff, employed by the most vindictive and tormenting of his duns.

Having served the writ, the bailiff was hastening away, and had reached in safety the landing, but Fitzopal had stolen close behind, and with one kick sent 'Lady Brown' to the bottom of the stairs. Loud were the threats and oaths of the prostrate bailiff, who had really received some severe bruises in his sudden descent. Amazed at such an uproar, Major Smiley came out to know the cause.

And to his unspeakable surprise, he saw the *soi-disant* Lady Brown at the foot of the stairs, and Fitzopal ordering Vanille to kick the wretch into the street.

"What does it all mean?" said Smiley, as Fitzopal returned, bursting with laughter, to his sitting-room.

Fitzopal handed him the copy of the writ.

"That is what it means," he said. "The Lady Brown, over whose levity you were so ready to exult, is a bailiff, who to gain access to me has assumed this disguise."

"Capital!" said Smiley, "he's a clever fellow,

and deserved success ; and now do you, annoyed and vexed for the conquest of Lady Brown, repair at once to the shade of Miss Constance. These things must be mended, and you must be tied up—so the sooner the better."

CHAPTER XV.

Thus urged by Major Smiley on one hand, and driven to despair by his duns on the other, Adolphus Fitzpal resolved at once to present himself to the heiress; and he felt no doubt that, the introduction over, he would be able to say with Cæsar, "*Veni, vidi, vici!*"

After what had occurred, he did not feel very safe in shewing himself in the crowded thoroughfares of the West-end, and it was a comfort to him to remember that, from the conversation he had overheard between Stubbs (Sir Noah's valet), and Rose Pink (the heiress's maid), it was pretty

sure that Gower Street was the scene of her romantic machinations.

"I know already," he said to himself, "that she has assumed the name and character of Miss Evergreen; what need have I then of the assistance of that officious and impertinent fellow Doversaux? However, I'll hear what he has to say. Such a sharp, malevolent, sarcastic being, is much better as a friend than an enemy. Come, 'nothing venture, nothing have,' as even Smiley, 'the calculator,' says. Besides, he is quite right — my being married will be no barrier to my continuing as Ada's platonic lover; and he remarked very wisely that even the noblest and most disinterested of the sex are not proof against the dazzling halo of great wealth, or the detestable influence of poverty. I dare say even Ada would not like an ill-drest, badly-mounted, miserable, dun-ridden fellow, as she would the same man, if his means enabled him to keep pace with his taste, and be 'the glass of fashion and the mould of form.'"

So saying, Captain Fitzopal having, from his drawing-room windows, given one searching glance up and down Lower Grosvenor Street, (in which he lodged) drew his military cloak around him, and hastily bent his way towards the club where Mr. Devereux had appointed him.

“Ada does not deserve,” he said to himself, “that I should allow myself to be this hunted wretch for her. Every strange eye I meet makes me quail. I, who with this chance, nay certainty, of Miss Castleton, ought to be the object of Stulz’s worship and Glitter’s devotion, am obliged to beg their leniency to conciliate, when I long to defy them—to skulk about on foot, trying to escape notice, when I might, and will ere long, in the most elegant of equipages, challenge the scrutiny of the world of fashion and all its toadies.”

CHAPTER XVI.

Without any further accident, or ~~dangerous~~ ~~contre~~, Captain Fitzopal reached the street in which Mr. Devereux's Club was situated; and that small but remarkable looking person accidentally met him just as he had reached the entrance.

Although Captain Fitzopal came ostensibly to render a favor, yet as he considered himself of higher fashion and loftier rank than Mr. Devereux, he, in common with the exclusives of the day, assumed a cold and repelling hauteur, which is very far from conciliating those one wishes to

enlist in one's cause ; and which is perhaps one of the chief reasons why men of fashion so seldom excite any affection or interest in their inferiors and dependents, and why the servants and trades-people, who have profited by their extravagance, see them ruined, disgraced, and incarcerated, rather with triumph than sympathy. Mr. Devereux Spight had in his heart all the scornful and selfish feelings which form the exclusive of the day, but not having lived among such men, as one of them, he had not acquired the cold insolence of their bearing. He could not help being rather obsequious and yielding in his manner, even while his heart was full of pride and malice. There was luckily no one in the reading-room, to which Mr. Devereux led the way, but a deaf old politician at the further end of the apartment, poring over 'The Times :' and assuming a warm and most amiable manner, Mr. Devereux Spight said, as he placed chairs for himself and his guest—"I am very glad to see you at last, Captain Fitzopal ; I began to fear that you would not give me an

opportunity of serving you. It is a ~~one~~ I have long coveted, believe me."

Captain Fitzroy expressed no surprise at this: it appeared to him ~~nothing~~ ~~surprising~~ that a stranger should be ~~willing~~ to serve him. He replied, as a mere matter of course: "You are very good, and I really ~~feel~~ ~~very much~~ obliged to you for your attention."

"I dare say," said Mr. Dervilleur Singit, "you wonder at the interest I take in the welfare of a comparative stranger; but though I may be unknown to Captain Fitzroy, he is not so to me. or to ~~some~~. I am a strange sort of fellow—an idiot, I believe; and I do deplore the general ~~unintelligence~~, and, if I may use such a term, the ~~unintelligence~~ of our young male aristocracy, that I really should do a good deal to serve any one of that class in whom I recognise a taste for literature and the arts. I wish to see such an one wealthy, and the same chance which enabled the master of the Fallo to serve the lion, will probably ~~enable~~ me to ~~win~~ one who, having shown so

much taste for poetry, woudl, I fancy, prove a Mecænas, were he as rich in money as in wit.— Sir, I know some of your works.”

“Indeed!” said Fitzopal, affecting nonchalance, but coloring with surprise and pleasure. “I presume you allude to my little series of ‘Songs of the Sentiments,’ and my things in the Magazines and Annuals, signed ‘Corydon.’”

“I do, Sir,” said Spight, who, though he knew Fitzopal had published some songs, had never before heard their title.

“I am glad you like them,” said the Captain, “for I have never heard the opinion of a male critic upon them; the women say they cannot read my last fragment in the Keepsake without tears.”

“Nor I,” said Spight; “for I could weep,” he inwardly added, “to think that there is such a puppy of a poetaster unwhipt.”

A short silence succeeded, and ere long the Captain, resuming something of his original hauteur, said: “And now, if you please, Sir, to the

point." (Spight assumed an air of deferential attention.) "My time is precious," said the Captain—"to be brief, if you can *let me into a wrinkle* about Miss Castleton, I shall be glad."

"I'll let him in for a good many, if I can get him to marry the Evergreen," thought Spight, as he bowed obsequiously.

"I am here," added the Captain, growing impatient, "to give you the opportunity you seemed to covet of——"

"Of ruining you, you egotistical popinjay!" thought Spight; but he said, with a tender and almost tearful joy: "Sir, I do covet the honour of serving you—your renown in the boudoir, united to your success in the thorny fields of literature; your gallantry, your ready wit excuse me, Sir, I am a strange being; these, which might have made some men your rivals or your foes, have made me your admirer and your friend. The little war of words into which I ventured to draw you at Lady Fathom's was a *ruse*, to see if the world had not overrated your powers of

repartee. I gloried in my own defeat, Sir, and, strange as it may seem, you conquered at once my wit and my friendship."

"Well, Sir," said the Captain, flattered, "I am glad to have made such a friend; but to the point. I can stand fire, but I cannot stand suspense."

"Well then, Sir, admiring your genius, and respecting your character even before I had conceived this personal regard for yourself, I had resolved to let you into a plot, by which you might make the heiress yours at once!"

"Oh, I've no doubt of her being ultimately mine," said the Captain, haughtily; "that is, if I wish it; but if you can in any way accelerate matters, I'll thank you."

"Then, Sir, know I am an old friend of Miss Castleton's—she is romantic, Sir, anxious to be loved for herself alone, and so on; and with the aid of two friends of mine, Mc. Peevish and Fitzplagiar, she has devised a very pretty little pastoral, of which she is the heroine!"

"Just what I overheard!" thought the Captain to himself. "Come, I may yet be in time, and avoid a prison, or the sale of my commission." Then, assuming an air of indifference, he said— "And where does she mean to carry on this farce, I pray?"

"Listen! Under the name of Evergreen, she has set up a sort of literary boarding-house, to which, through Mc. Peevish, Fitzplagiar, and myself, her prescribed suitors are to resort. In this disguise she is, as she fancies, to judge of their characters, tastes, feelings, &c. &c. And, further, she is to ascertain what impression she can make on their hearts, as a poor literary adventuress. I believe she will elope at once with the man she prefers, if he does but seem to love her."

"Then," said the Captain, "I being in the secret, will, if I can bring myself to fancy her, lay close siege to the *soi-disant* Evergreen, and in her person carry off the heiress to Gretna at once."

“Exactly!” said Spight; “and as she is no regular beauty, and does not look very young, you might but for me have scorned her under the name and disguise of Miss Evergreen.”

“Of course I should, my dear Sir,” said Fitzopal; “but is she not young and pretty then?—why, she can’t be very old!”

“No, not old, certainly; some seven or eight-and-twenty perhaps; but illness and India have added at least ten years to her appearance. But what of that? She is a fine, enthusiastic, impassioned creature. The tropical climate, which has stolen the fire from her eyes, has kindled it in her heart, and taken the glow from her cheek, to bestow it on her feelings. Besides, I should not think a man of Captain Fitzopal’s fashion would wish to be in love with his own wife!”

“Oh, no, no! as Smiley (a friend of mine) says, there’s no use in beauty in one’s own wife, whatever there may be in that quality in another’s.”

"Of course," sneered Spight, "it gives opportunity for reprisals."

"My friend's very words; you are kindred spirits: I must make you acquainted."

"Sir, I shall be proud of the honour."

"Mr. Spight," said the Captain, rising, "I am much obliged to you, and shall be glad to be introduced by you."

"Then, Sir, any morning you are disengaged, I shall be most proud and happy to introduce you——"

"Thank you—to-morrow, if you please. I am really obliged to you, Mr. Devereux; for certainly a plain woman of seven or eight-and-twenty, looking ten years older, would not have had a second glance from me, particularly in the character of a literary drudge, living by her wits and a boarding-house!"

"And," added Spight, "with a novel-writing sister and a dependent neice."

"Shocking idea! and who are they?"

"Oh, they are what they seem; Miss Ever-

green, the real *bona fide* Miss Evergreen, (red-haired and stout,) and a poor, scribbling, half-Spanish protégé of theirs, their neice!"

"And how came my heiress to be so intimate with this strange knot of disreputable *paper-stainers*?"

"Infernal puppy!" inwardly ejaculated Spight, "so that is the way he designates men and women of letters!" Then forcing a smile, he said confidentially—"The fact is, Captain Fitzopal, Miss Evergreen (the real red-haired Miss Evergreen,) who will pass as your heiress's sister, though a lady by birth, was once reduced to the drudgery of teaching; but would not have it known for the world. She was head teacher in the school where Miss Castleton was educated. I was a strange romantic fellow, of independent fortune and desultory habits, with a hunting box in the neighbourhood, and having a fancy for the society of pretty girls, I made up to Miss Crab, the Mistress of the Establishment, and thus became intimate with all the inmates. Finding a

fond of soul, romance, and sentiment in Miss Castleton, then a very young girl, I (for I was always an oddity, and much devoted to literature) undertook to direct her taste in poetry and the *belles lettres*. When she went to India I corresponded with her, with the same intention: but, believe me, no thought of love or even flirtation ever entered the head of either!"

"Oh, of course not," said Fitzopal, haughtily, and as if it were indeed an utter impossibility that any woman *he* could marry should have so demeaned herself, or Mr. Devereux have so presumed.

The proud and sensitive little Spight bit his lip and writhed; but presently a malicious joy sparkled in his eyes, and he quietly rubbed his hands with a low inward chuckle, while Captain Fitzopal, in an aristocratic fit of real or assumed absorption, (gazing with distended eyes on vacancy) was twirling a tiny ring on his taper little finger.

"Oh!" thought Spight to himself; "if I can

but revenge all this, by making the insolent egotist elope with old Evergreen, I'd give up the 'Hornet' to see her his wife."—"You are musing, Sir," he gently said—"a fit of poetical inspiration perhaps! Alas! for the prosy realities of life, which recal us so abruptly from the fairy-land of fancy—I have got something to say, before we part; you will see that an old friendship for the lady actuates me in this affair, as much as my recently-conceived interest in you. I think I serve her by revealing her secret!"

"Well, that you certainly do!" said the Captain; "she'd have lost her chance of me but for you, 'pon my soul she would; and you shall certainly introduce me."

"I shall be most proud—excuse, then, one word of advice. This protégé neice, this Inez Mc. Alpine, a poor little literary drudge, and a sort of toady to the real Miss Evergreen, is the loveliest, liveliest, and most sparkling little brunette that ever marred a man's fortune or made her own; eyes black as jet, teeth of pearls, raven

hair, and a perfect figure, with an endearing, bewitching mixture of *naïveté* and softness in her manner, and a good deal of shrewdness and tact in her nature. I cannot but warn so great a connoisseur in, and admirer of beauty as Captain Fitzopal, that any attentions to her will not escape the heiress's jealous scrutiny, and be perhaps the only thing that could interfere with his success."

"I dare say you mean very well, Mr. Devreux," said the Captain, "but I am too much used to beauty to be in any danger; I have seen too many blondes and brunettes——"

"Yes, but if report says true, not without results which in this case were ruin to your plans."

"Once for all, Sir," said the Captain, "I dislike brunettes, and I hate toadies; I have generally found them ugly and venomous as the reptile whence they take their name."

"Capital!" said Spight; "but this one, like the reptile you so wittily allude to, has a pair of

precious jewels in her head, in the shape of the finest black eyes in the world. She is a thorny rose, withering in the shade of the genuine old Evergreen. But enough, you are a man of the world—*verbum sat*—I forgot to say the heiress professes poetry and piety—so you must give her a touch of both."

"Oh, trust me, Mr. Devereux; I've wonderful insight into character; I have made it my study, and as I have resolved to sacrifice myself to this golden idol, I anticipate no difficulties. I have overcome, I fancy, all that could exist, in conquering my own repugnance."

"I shall smile," said the sly Spight, "if after all, I should see you caught in the snare against which I have warned you. Nature has made the young Inez Mc. Alpine (Miss Evergreen's niece) lovely, bewitching, and, I might add, more than half a Spaniard, where men are concerned. Art has made her clever, gentle, apparently *naïve*, and yet demure; and poverty and dependence have made her determine to marry the first gentleman

she can entrap, and put her upon ~~harmless~~ ^{harmless} conduct to free herself from spinsterhood and her ~~husband~~ ^{husband}! But again I ~~must~~ ^{must} remind you, with her ~~or husband~~, are ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~secure~~ ^{secure} ~~actions~~?"

" You have made me anxious to see her," said the Captain: " and were I nineteen instead of forty and twenty, I might be in some danger; but as it is, I am armed in triple steel. Will you tell the master to call me a cab, and might I ask you to meet me in the Pantheon at three to-night?"

" I will not fail you!"

" To-morrow, then."

" And you will not be disappointed if the ~~latter~~ ^{latter} occurs to you, at first sight, neither young nor pretty?"

" I assure you, I shall see in her, her hundred thousand charms, and seek no more!"

So saying, and bowing haughtily, with a ~~cautious~~ ^{cautious} gaze up and down the street, (which did not escape the quick eye of Spight) Captain Fitz-ugly stepped into the cab, and rather dreading his

own lodgings after what had so recently passed there, he ordered himself to be driven to one of his Clubs, where he dined and slept.

Mr. Devereux Spight, when he returned to the reading-room, could not forbear one little laugh, and a few capers, indicative of triumph; and rubbing his hands, he indulged in an anticipated triumph which was rapture to his malicious spirit.

CHAPTER XVII.

It did not escape the quick eye of Devereux Spight, when he met Captain Fitzopal at the Pantheon the next day, that in spite of that gentleman's assumption of security and indifference, he had made a most careful and becoming toilette. He was a person of too much real taste in dress, ever to present a showy or a fine appearance; but every article of his attire betrayed to the experienced eye, genius in himself to plan, and first-rate artists to execute his design. Even the envious and despairing Spight thought, as he looked at him, that he had seldom seen a more

perfect specimen of a young Englishman of fashion.

Pleased, too, at his own success in his toilette, and rather obliged to Spight for his punctuality, the Captain was much more gracious and urbane than usual, and for the first time, on meeting Spight, smiled as he might have done upon an equal, and cordially extended his hand; for although Captain Fitzopal had acquired among his own exclusive set a great coldness and hauteur, with an absurd assumption of superiority towards all without the pale, his natural manner was unaffected and endearing; and Spight was amazed at its influence even upon himself.

By the Captain's proposal, they took a cab; he had two reasons, the one that he did not wish to be seen by any of his own set, walking familiarly with a nobody; and the other, that he dreaded being seen at all by those whom he called "rascally canaille," namely, his tradespeople, forgetting that the man of fashion who evades a just

debt, is in reality much more rascally than the tradesman who would enforce it.

When they arrived in Gower Street, some delay occurred before the door was opened, and Devereux Spight, who knew more of the habits of his fair hostess than most people, taking a furtive glance at the window, was not surprised to see the aquiline features of Miss Evergreen, and the caroty crop of her sister Thalia, hastily protruded, and as hastily withdrawn.

He had great misgivings in his own mind as to the effect on Fitzopal's fastidious mind, of the wretched slattern of a maid-servant, who would probably 'question the stranger, and answer the door.'

A few days had elapsed since he had been at the Evergreens', for a libellous article in the Hornet had compelled him to play at hide and seek, and above all, not to shew himself at his well-known quarters. That affair having been compromised, he was able to reappear there, which he did with many regrets that he had not

been able to superintend the domestic arrangements before he introduced the Captain, and many misgivings as to the consequences of his long absence. He was, however, most agreeably surprised, when after a second rat-tat, the neat and pretty Rose Pink opened the door. The Captain felt satisfied too, for he instantly recognised in her the same smart damsel whose conversation with Stubbs (Sir Noah's valet) he had so opportunely overheard.

“The maid is a security for the appearance of the mistress,” he thought; “there can be no mistake—all must be right.” And he smilingly followed Spight up-stairs. But if Spight had been pleased at the appearance of the neat and pretty Rose, instead of the horrible Dinah, with her squint, her curl-papers, and her squalid dirt, he was delighted when he marked the almost magic change which the taste and wealth of the heiress had produced. Many a char-woman must have been employed, and actively too, and great must have been the consumption of soap,

hot water, bath-brick, and fuller's earth. Not a cobweb was to be seen, nor could Spight's sharp eye detect one speck of dust, so lavishly had Miss Castleton come down with her own. The mahogany balustrades had been rubbed into the brightest polish, the handsome stone stairs were marble-white, and the centre covered with a rich new carpet, which was spread over the large entrance hall, where a ragged mat, out of which once oozed mud or dust, (according to the season,) had rotted for years. Some handsome orange trees and other evergreens in tubs, and a few marble busts, gave taste and dignity to the entrance; and though Fitzopal was too much used to the splendours of the best houses of the West End, to take any note of this, Spight felt extremely gratified at so beneficial a change in his own domicile, and quite relieved of all sense of shame and disgrace, which he had anticipated in introducing the Captain at 'Evergreen House.'

Spight felt quite sure that Miss Castleton's improvements had not been confined to the

entrance, but even he was scarcely prepared for the surprise occasioned by the opening of the drawing-room door. That hitherto large, untidy, and dreary room had been, under the old *regime*, cut off from the back drawing-room and a boudoir *en suite*, with which it communicated by folding-doors, by a large old bureau, once the property of Mad Evergreen. Notched, ink-stained, and ricketty, it had been placed against the large folding-doors, which shut out the maiden-bower of the sister Evergreens; and by its side, another miserable heritage, the old harpsichord of the poor Daily Governess—the ill-fated Mrs. Evergreen. Both now had been removed up-stairs, as also the Evergreens' own huge desks and little tables, and all the shabby, ill-matched chairs which had so long offended Spight's orderly eye. The three rooms were now thrown open *en suite*, richly carpetted—elegantly furnished—every thing exquisitely clean and tasteful. The windows were hung with curtains of amber damask and embroidered muslin, and

filled with stands of delightful plants. The boudoir was amply supplied with the same. Clementina's beautiful harp and piano, and all her costly Indian knick-nacks, handsome jars, vases, cabinets, sandal-wood boxes, &c., &c., &c., gave an Eastern splendour to the room. Pier glasses almost covered the walls. An exquisite scent of geraniums, heliotrope, and sandal-wood, delighted the sense, and had displaced one of new proofs, old musty papers, and soot, which, till Clementina's arrival, had been allowed to steal down the chimney at its pleasure. The Evergreens were far too much engrossed by the ideal, ever to remember such a reality as a 'Sweep.'

"I had no idea," said Fitzopal (throwing himself into a luxurious reading chair) "that in this obsolete, outlandish part of the world, they had so correct a notion of things. I declare these rooms wouldn't disgrace Belgrave Square—I fancy a literary boarding house must be a good speculation, or else the genuine Miss Evergreen

must have wielded her pen to some purpose. I never was in a place of this kind before, but declare Gillow couldn't have fitted up a suite of rooms more elegantly. I had begun to form a very mean idea of the tastes and habits of my heiress; but I see now, she knew what she was about."

Spight thought so too, though he had by this time assumed a most perfect *nonchalance*. He thought the whole affair very like magic; but a first-rate London upholsterer of the present day would have been thought a wizard in the olden time.

Spight fancied he recognized the good taste and the coquetry of the Indian heiress, in the amber hangings, so calculated to set off her own complexion, and he began to fear that a very deep interest in the handsome Captain must have been at the bottom of all this.

"I hope," he said to himself, "the lavish little spendthrift has not bestowed all this costly furniture on those idiotic old slatterns, who

would prefer the old rubbish they have been used to, and will soon soil and destroy all this costly elegance. If I make up my mind to have the girl myself, with only five hundred a year, it becomes very important to me that she should neither squander her present wealth, nor run in debt. This would be delightful for our own abode, and I shall be very uneasy till I know she has not given all this expensive furniture to those untidy, ruinous hussies."

Vain hope! Clementina had no idea of the value of money, much less of that of furniture; one of her greatest delights was 'to give,' and the Evergreens, though pleased when they saw the splendid effect produced, (as ignorant on such points as herself,) thought they rather conferred a favour, in suffering the wilful and lavish girl to have their father's bureau, their mother's harpsichord, and their own desks and tables, removed up-stairs; for though Clementina had kindly replaced them by two elegant writing-tables, with every possible convenience, they

were too much accustomed to their huge old desks and ricketty tables, to find any inspiration in their modern substitutes; and they were therefore always obliged to retire to their own room to sacrifice to the Muse on their accustomed altars.

“I wonder how long they mean to keep us waiting!” said Fitzopal, having looked at himself in all the glasses in succession.

“They’re evidently just gone,” said Spight. “This last new novel is just open; that netting has this minute been thrown down; and even poor Inez Mc. Alpine has not had time to dry the ink on this music she’s been copying. Of course they’re all flown to their mirrors, to indulge in the pleasures of reflection; but I wonder Inez is not at her embroidery frame, for she’s generally stitched to it like the canvass. Ah! here they come! Now, Captain Fitzopal, now I shall see if you are as indifferent as you pretend to the charms of the prettiest little brunette in the world.”

At this moment the door opened, and in sailed, dressed in the Eastern style, Miss Evergreen, leaning on the arm of the well-dressed Thalia, who to form the greater foil and contrast, was dressed in a common English print, her hair in a Brinsford crop. At a modest distance followed Mrs. McAlpine (as we must now call our heiress); she carried in one hand an embroidered cushion, which she placed on a table under the arm of the actual Evergreen, (in the Captain's apprehension, Miss Castleton in disguise), and in the other a fan of painted feathers, which she placed also beside the turbaned damsel.

Captain Fitzopal, in spite of all his assumed *sang froid* and presence of mind, was, in vulgar phrase, 'taken aback'; he actually changed color, and looked foolish, and shy, and dismayed, and all sorts of absurd things. Spight hastened to his relief, by leading him up to the fair Sultana, who had thrown herself on a couch in graceful negligence, and said: "Miss Evergreen! allow me the honour of introducing Captain Fitzopal."

Captain Fitzopal bowed, and the lady bent her head in return.

“Miss Thalia Evergreen,” said Spight; “Captain Fitzopal.”

The Captain bowed very stiffly, and turned towards the pretty Inez, as if expecting the introduction to extend to her.

Spight had evidently not intended to introduce her, but seeing the Captain expected it, and that Inez, blushing and smiling, was looking archly from under her long black eye-lashes, he said curtly, “Miss Inez Mc. Alpine;” and the lady curtsied with deep and well-assumed humility, while the gentleman bowed far more gallantly than he had done to her whom he supposed to be the heiress.

All this occupied but a few moments, though it takes some time to describe. At length Miss Evergreen said, in a loud, and as the Captain thought, a harsh voice:—

“Captain Fitzopal! I am enchanted to make the acquaintance of a gentleman so celebrated in

the annals of the *haut ton*. Inez, go to your embroidery."

Captain Fitzopal started; he had been taking a rapid survey of Inez, who looked excessively pretty and *piquante*, in a neatly-fitting white muslin dress, with a black silk apron; her black hair braided in front, and gathered behind into a scarlet silk net; her neat little collarette and her very pretty foot; he had even noted her one rosebud in her graceful bust, and had perceived, through her half-smiling lips, her small unequalled teeth. He hastily withdrew himself from this contemplation, to reply, with assumed interest, to Miss Evergreen, who was twisting her black ringlets, and arranging her turban, absurdly over-dressed, and looking like an actress by daylight.

"I covet not," he said, in reply to her compliment, "the frivolous reputation of a leader of fashion; domestic happiness is all I prize. Give me 'a desert for my dwelling-place, and one fair spirit for my minister'——"

Having said this with a deliberate stare at Miss Evergreen, meant to show off his fine eyes, and conquer her at once, he, while she affectedly dropped hers beneath what she considered his impassioned gaze, sent an arch glance in search of the fair Inez, whose black eyes he detected laughing outright at him, in spite of the demure expression of the rest of her face.

“How delightful are such sentiments from the lips of fashion,” said Miss Evergreen; “I thought the fantastic toe of Ton delighted to upset all household Gods, and fire-side idols; but I am a sad novice,” she added, rising and walking to the window under pretence of looking out, but in reality to show off her stately figure and graceful walk.

“A *novice*!” whispered Fitzopal to Spight; “I wish she were a *nun*! What a creature! looks forty at least; she needs all the weight of her two hundred thousand pounds, to make her go down, I’m sure.”

As he spoke, he, to conceal his purpose, had

taken up a scrap-book, and seemed to be making something to Spight.

"Ah, Captain!" cried Miss Evergreen, going up to him, and playfully closing the book—"are you poetical?"

"A wild worshipper of the Muse."

"Then," said Thalia, who had not spoken before, "do read the Captain your 'Ode to the Unattainable.'"

"What a sublime title!" said Fitzopal.

"Nay, 'tis but a fragment," said the Lady. "Treacherous girl!" she added, affectionately holding up her finger to Thalia.

"Let me implore!" said Fitzopal, (anticipating some amusement from the 'Ode to the Unattainable'); "but I fear I have no influence."

"I said not so, Captain!" replied the Lady, with a timid glance and a half sigh; then added majestically, "Inez, come hither!"

Inez, unaccustomed to the tone and to the appellation, and amusing herself with the incipient flirtation before her, suffered the summons

to be repeated before she heeded it. She then sprang forth with a playful grace, and assuming an air of meek alacrity, she exclaimed: "I beg your pardon, Aunt—did you call me?"

"Yes! go to my boudoir, and get my desk."

"Where is it, ma'am?"

"Nay, child, it is your place to know, not to ask," said the Queen-like Evergreen; "but excuse me, Captain, I will seek this fragment myself. Inez, attend me, my love!"

As Inez followed the over-dressed sultana-like poetess, almost treading with a fairy foot on that august humbug's sweeping train, she stole a glance of inexpressible archness at the elegant Captain, who, as he met her rosy smile, gazed at her with that sort of melancholy tenderness, which seems to mean volumes, and often has no meaning at all. When they were gone, he looked carefully round, and perceiving that the other Evergreen was watering her plants in the inner room, and out of ear-shot, he said to Spight: "By George, that little Spaniard is a most

bewitching creature! What eyes! what teeth! what a form and foot! full of frolic, too, I see; I must get up a flirtation with her, my dear Devereux, just as a sort of ballet between the acts of this tedious drama."

"Hush!" said Devereux, "here comes our hostess!"

At this moment, Thalia Evergreen, armed with an awful looking manuscript, approached Fitzopal, and said: "To wile away the time, Mr. Devereux, shall I run through a few pages of my new novel?"

"I dare say Captain Fitzopal would be delighted," said Spight, enjoying the helpless anguish of Fitzopal's countenance.

The victim bowed, and Thalia took a seat; but she had scarcely read the title, "Frolicsome Frank, or the Favourite of Fun," when in swept Miss Evergreen, followed by Inez.

"Nay," she said, waving Thalia away, "I think I have a prior claim on the Captain's attention."

“Decidedly—” said Spight.

Thalia rose. Miss Evergreen took a blotted sheet of foolscap from a writing-case, Inez placed before her.

“After all,” she added, smiling and blushing, “I don’t think I’ve courage—I really don’t—I never felt so nervous, so odd—don’t look at me, any of you—don’t you, Captain.”

The caution was needless; the Captain’s eyes were fixed on Inez, who leant behind the poetess’s chair.

“Go away, Inez!” said the lady; “you fidget me. Why do you, and Thalia, and Devereux, crowd round me? You’ve heard it before. Go away, all of you. I hate so many listeners—do go, and do something else. I’m sure the Captain’s all indulgence; no one shall hear it but the Captain.”

“Well, then!” said Devereux Spight, “I’ll go and do penance for my sins; so we’ll go into another corner, Miss Evergreen, and you shall

read me your last chapter of 'Frolicsome Frank.'

"Come, then, Inez," said Thalia, adding to Spight, "no tête à têtes in corners, Sir, for a daughter of the spotless house of Evergreen!"

"Now, Madam, I implore you," said the Captain, angry and yet amused, but thinking as they had all moved off, he had best turn the opportunity to account—"the poem, I beg—I can stand fire, but I cannot stand suspense!"

"Too captivating wit!" said the Lady, as if involuntarily. "You won't be severe!" she added, suddenly fixing her long, half-closed, black eyes upon him.

"Nay, Madam!" said Fitzopal, "you trifle with my impatience, and time flies on—— and I have an appointment——"

"An appointment, Sir!" And she looked surprised and jealous.

The Captain remembered Spight's hint about a touch of piety and sentiment. He said, "It is

only with the beadle, about the conduct of the charity children in the church !”

“ How pious !” ejaculated the lady ; then added to herself, “ When did that heathen, Spight, show such a christian spirit ?”

“ Come, let me read it myself,” said the Captain, playfully snatching the manuscript.

The lady drags it back ; a little struggle ensues ; the Captain turning round, sees Inez and Devereux peeping at him—their heads are instantly turned away. “ What a bore,” he murmurs, as the lady, in a very loud drawling tone, begins :—

ODE TO THE UNATTAINABLE.

With its wild tenderness my heart o'erflows,
As 'neath its fragrant moisture bends the rose ;
On rainbow pinions flies each ardent wish,
As 'neath the dazzling waters darts the fish.
The Unattainable ! the Wild ! the Lone !
The Desert-born !....Oh, Music in the moan,
The anguish'd howl of Passion's fierce deaire,
The soul of tenderness—the heart of fire !
By the lone sea-shore, with soft glancing feet :
It comes ; I fly the desert-born to meet !....

The Unattainable ! the Wild ! the Lone !
I am thine own—yes, I am all thine own,
Neath Zembia's frozen skies ! and India's torrid zone !—

“What infernal trash and balderdash !” thought Fitzopal ; but he said in a gentle voice, (as the lady, winding up with a loud flourish, looked up to him for applause) “I am lost in amazement ! I cannot conceive how thoughts so grand and boundless can proceed from a female mind, or such wild feelings rise in a maiden bosom !”

“Oh, Captain ! oh fie, Captain ! fie, flatterer ! But you like my ode ? I see you do ! it opens gently ; but it rises, methinks——”

“It does indeed.” The Captain paused a moment ; he heard Inez and Devereux in playful converse ; all his difficulties, all his perils, all Gaspar Smiley’s counsels, and Ada’s rebuffs, rush through his brain. Wealth, pomp, splendor, followed in their train. “If it is to be, it shall be at once,” he thought ; “I can never stand much of this.” He looked at the lady ; amazed at his excited expression and wandering

eye, she was gazing at him with encouraging fondness. Fitzopal drew near—he took a seat beside her on the sofa—he pressed a hand—she did not withdraw it.

“Miss Evergreen!” he said (in a low, hurried whisper) “deem me not rash, bold, sudden—but I too have hitherto been a worshipper of the Unattainable, the longing for which is the vulture of my heart. Lady! be to me the Desert-born of that sublime effusion!—be thine the glancing feet, you sing so sweetly—and let me hear thee say, ‘I am thine own—yes, I am all thine own!’ (And” he added inwardly, as the lady buried her face in her hands, “thy two hundred thousand pounds also!”)

“This is so sudden, Captain! so very sudden!”

“So is the electric spark, and yet ‘tis life or death. One word—If indeed Fortune has frowned on Nature’s favorite child—if you are dependent on your sister and an unjust world, I cannot offer

you all you deserve; but you can lose little by smiling on my suit."

"But so hasty a proposal—clandestine too—oh, Captain!"

"And what of that? What to a daughter of genius and a child of song are the doltish etiquettes of the vulgar? Say, you will be mine. I will arrange all for an early elopement. Let us escape all envious comments, all vexatious details. Before another moon has filled her horns, let us escape to the land of flood and field—to Gretna's hallowed altar—escape all impertinent interference—all maddening delays—and," he added inwardly, "all settlements.) "Speak, my heart is in my ear!"

"Love at first sight!" ejaculated the lady. "Wild, incomprehensible enchantment, which casts its spell over us both! Captain, I yield! blushingly, tremblingly, but not unwillingly, to your impassioned suit. . . ."

"Write me then a few delightful lines, directed to me, 14, Lower Grosvenor Street, to confirm

this dream of bliss, and to appoint some place where we may meet unwatched, and discuss this at our leisure. Anywhere! anywhere! the nearer your own neighbourhood the better."

"I consent; oh, Captain, you shall hear from me to-morrow—the Soho bazaar perhaps.—But excuse me—I am bewildered now—I must collect my scattered senses—lead me to the door—and, oh, Captain, never, never trifle with the jewel you have won!"

At the door, the lady gazed fondly at him; he bowed—she curtsied—he kissed her hand—she withdrew it in confusion, and hurried away.

"Thank heaven! she's off—I'm off too., "If it is done, then it were well it were done quickly!" What a sacrifice! Ah, it's a bitter pill, but well gilded. Oh, Ada! your coldness has driven me to this! While daily basking in your smiles, I could not have wooed yon scare-crow. What then! perhaps I shall lose nothing in your eyes by the wealth and splendour with which this match will invest me. So Smiley says, and he knows women well. Oh, here they come!"

"What!" said Miss Thalia, "my sister has finished her poem just as I have completed my chapter. I hope you have been as much interested as these good people."

"Are you going already?" said Devereux Spight, as Fitzopal took up his hat.

"Already! for a first visit, I fear I have intruded too long. Will you allow your servant to call me a cab?"

While the cab was coming, Inez playfully questioned the Captain on the merits of the poem he had heard. And though her graceful and animated manner fascinated his taste, there was an arch and poignant humour about her, and a something in her smile, which made him suspect that she saw in him the wretched fortune-hunter, who was about to sell his hand for the Indian heiress's wealth; and he was very glad when the cab drove up, and he found himself alone with his prospect of immense wealth, and out of reach of the playful sallies and arch glances of the pretty brunette.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In a miserable little garret, in a small street opening into the mews of the most aristocratic neighbourhood in London, and therefore in the world, Janet Macauley had hidden herself, and him who was at once her glory and her shame—the child, whose father was the selfish, calculating, but fascinating Gaspar Smiley.

Janet's father was, alas! a minister of the Kirk of Scotland—very poor, very strict, very humble in his mode of life and in his doctrine, but with a fund of hereditary Scotch pride in an

old and stainless name, and one of the most enthusiastic, zealous, and uncompromising of Calvinists.

He had brought up his daughters (his family consisted only of his wife and two daughters) to work very hard, rise very early, live on very plain fare, and do in all things much as the farmer and cottagers' girls around them did; their tools were the same, but their pleasures, their amusements, and their holidays—in these Macauley's daughters had no share. But by way of compensation, he allowed his wife (a delicate invalid, a Lady by birth, and with a gentle complying spirit, painfully in awe of her husband) to instruct them, in hours of recreation, in some of the lady-like, though rather old-fashioned, accomplishments she had herself acquired at a boarding-school in America. Her own spinnet and her own guitar were literally brought into play; and Janet and Alice Macauley shewed a great aptitude for music, and discovered sweet voices, and natural talent for singing. But no vain songs, or idle

dances, or profane tunes, as he called them, were they allowed to practise; all was strictly forbidden, except psalms, and hymns, and spiritual melodies. Mrs. Macauley, who herself privately delighted in the songs, ballads, and gay tunes, which brought back the days of her youth, submitted without an expostulating word or a murmur to her husband's will in his presence; but when he was 'over the hills and far awa' on some fanatical errand, carrying terror and despair, not comfort and hope, to the death-bed of some poor mountaineer, she would delight the young ears of her two beautiful girls with "Oh where, and oh where?" with "Donald," "Ye Banks and Braes o' bonny Doun," "Auld Robin Gray," "Robin Adair," and even "Roy's wife of Aldevaloch," with many others, (long to tell) and cheer up their young hearts, and set their little feet dancing gaily to reels, cotillions, strathspeys, and country dances. Excessive rigour and severity on the stronger side called forth (as it always will) cowardice, cunning, and

deception on the weaker. In all things it was the same: the Father once safely off on some long expedition, the terrors of Calvinism, in the shape of ponderous tomes of heavy sermons, and some elaborate works of Mr. Macauley's own, called "The Red-hot Coals for Sinners' heads," and "The Destined Sons of Perdition," were exchanged for a few old romances—"Pamela," "Clarissa Harlowe," "The Vicar of Wakefield," and a school selection of poetry; or for some light fancy works, by the invalid mother's arm-chair, instead of the spinning wheel and the darning needle. The conversation which in the Father's presence was generally engrossed by him, (his wife and daughters' share in it being chiefly confined to meek monosyllables of assent,) consisted chiefly of vehement denunciations against the vanities of the world—the sinfulness of pleasure—the corrupt nature of man—the terrors of hell—and the certainty of everlasting torture for all but the few elect chosen from the beginning of the world. If anything of a lighter nature

relieved the monotonous horrors of such discussions, it was in the shape of severe comments on the folly of such a parent, and the lightness of such a lassie, among the neighbours, as were known to attend some fair or wake, with a not very christian but sweeping contempt for all less gently born than himself, and an earnest effort to instil into his young daughters' minds a notion that those who boasted their descent from the brave chief Allan Macauley on the father's side, and on the mother's from the house of Leslie, should consider as an insult, any advance or attention from the naebodies around, who if they kenned their grandfather at a', kenned weel he was na' fit to sit in the presence o' a Macauley, or a Leslie.

Strange inconsistency ! this human and excessive pride of birth, in one whose sole study was the Scriptures, and who was ready to own that all flesh was grass, and man the meanest of worms, a prey for other worms ; yet so it was ; and of all his doctrines, this was the one which

sunk the deepest into the hearts of his young daughters. Pride, vanity, and contempt of others, take root so readily in the human heart, that Janet and Alice learned betimes to despise the neighbour maidens as companions, and to scorn the idea of suitors in the wealthiest of the farmers' sons around them.

But while the father so imprudently cultivated feelings so opposed to that humility which is the essence of Christianity—Nature, and woman's passionate wish to love and to be loved, began to work its way in each young breast; and the mother, less proud, but more vain than Macauley himself, with her old novels, romances, and ballads, her tales of her girlhood and its conquests, her absurd over-estimate of dress, beauty, and fashion—put the finishing stroke to the errors of her children's education, and unwittingly prepared the way by which the loveliest, the most impassioned, and romantic, was to fall lower, far lower, than the humblest of the cotter's

daughters around her, who had brought no stain on her humble name.

Poor, poor Janet! her father's pride had taught her to scorn all the youths who already owned in her the Flower of Glenburn; her mother's vanity had made her all anxiety for conquest, and the admiration of some high-born, high-bred lover; her own heart was full of passion, her head of romance; and just at this very time, only entering upon her sixteenth spring, her bad angel threw in her way the artful, the calculating, the terrible Gaspar Smiley.

Macaulay, who had been for some days on a mission of terror among some huts in the Highlands, chancing to return unexpectedly, and unwisely preparing a surprise for his wife and children, stole upon them one evening, just as the girls, arrayed in some old finery which had been their mother's, were gaily dancing to a lively tune the invalid was playing on her old spinnet.

The consternation of all three no pen can

describe, when the harsh features of the old Galvinat—as he stood in his black attire, his white hair standing on end with horror—first caught the eye of his eldest girl. The poor invalid fainted; and the daughters tried to rush upstairs, and hide their gay attire and bejewelled heads from their infuriate father.

But in vain; in a voice of thunder he ordered them to remain—bore in his stalwart arms his unmarriageable wife to her bed—sent the bare-legged Abramie, their only servant, to watch her, and remained in the room where, pale and with distended eyes, the girls stood awaiting their doom. Macaulay was a very tall, muscular, and powerful man, at about fifty-five years of age; with a determined mind, and hair white, not with time, but with ill-directed study, passionate through education oral, and incessant sweat of brow and brain. His eyes were large, black as death, and in excitement terrible to behold; his features were very handsome, and his forehead massive and high. In youth he had been so remarkable

for the austerity of his life and the beauty of his person, that the profane had nicknamed him, "The Beauty of Holiness;" and every girl and every teacher in the fashionable school where Miss Janet Leslie was brought up, was in love with the terrible minister.

Janet, who had something of her father's spirit, as of his features, looked at him as he entered the room, with eyes black and large as his own, but which quailed at the fiery wrath she saw kindled in his; while Alice, with more of her mother's timid nature, blue-eyed and of the softest style of beauty, clinging to Janet, who stood upright, though trembling, threw herself on her knees and wept, and prayed for mercy.

Slowly, and to the unspeakable horror of the poor girls, the father took from a table close by, his heavy riding whip. "Ye daur na', father!" cried Janet, roused to fury, and throwing her arms round Alice, as if to protect her; "ye daur na' do sae cooard and sae unmanly a deed, as

strike your ain dochters, and they lassies grown,
like dogs! Shame on ye!"

"Oh, mercy! mercy! for the love of Heaven!" sobbed Alice; but the daring of the one, and the supplication of the other, were alike lost on the enraged old Calvinist.

"It's mercy ye shall hae," he cried; "puir fule that ye are, and ye bauld hizzie, when a woman grown tricks hersel' out like a senseless wean, she must be chastised like a bairn. Bare-necked! and bare-armed!" he cried, (seizing on them both with one horrible gripe), "sae mooch the better—ye'll feel this the mair. Graceless hizzies! predestined daughters o' perdition!" he added, inflicting, as he spoke, several severe lashes of his cruel whip on the delicate arms and shoulders of the poor girls, the pain of which made Alice shriek aloud, and even Janet set her teeth and groan. "Spare the rod, and spoil the child!" he cried, continuing his cruel blows, till both the brave and the timid knelt and shrieked for mercy.

“ It is well !” he cried, “ ye shriek for mercy now, and your earthly father heeds your prayer ; the time will come, if ye gang this gate, when ye will howl for mercy in pangs to which this smart is pleasant, and ye will hear from gulfs of fire, while fiends lash you with scorpions, ‘ Depart fra’ me, I never knew ye, workers o’ iniquity !’ ”

“ Livery of Satan !” he cried, tearing from Janet’s flaxen hair an old tinsel cap and feather, long hoarded up by her poor mother among other secret stores ; “ trappings of Belial !” he continued, plucking a faded wreath of white roses from Alice’s brow ; “ lures of the devil, and wages of perdition !” he cried, rending away every ornament with which the girls were adorned ; “ those stripes are dearer to my eyes than all the gems of Golconda ; they speak of a sinner saved—these of a soul lost !” Whence came this sinful rubbish ?” he cried, in a voice of thunder, after he had piled in one heap, flowers, feathers, beads, scarfs, and ribbons. Both were silent.

"Whence came they?" he shouted again, seizing his whip, which he had thrown aside.

"They were Mamma's!" sobbed Alice.

"I thought sae! I thought sae!" groaned the father; "a daughter o' Vanity and o' this warld! a whitèd sepulchre! a child o' sin! within a' vanity and corruption! I am weel punished. What fruit could I expect fra' sic a tree? yet twenty years o' my guidance, my discipline, my exhortations, might hae taught. What hae they taught her? naething but deceit. Aweel, aweel, sae it was destined, sae it will be. I hae done my best; but I canna save fra' the wrath to come, the destined children o' perdition; but it may be I can pluck these brands fra' the burning; and I believe the spirit that stirred within me to return hame thus suddenly the night, was sent to save yer souls, ye children of wrath, and daughters of vanity!"

So saying, to the horror of the girls, who well knew how their poor mother valued every bead, and bow, and flower connected with her early

triumphs, he lifted the glittering pile on to the blazing fire of pine-wood, and stirred it in with the poker, till not one fragment remained unconsumed.

"Gang yer ways now," he cried to his pale and weeping children; "gang yer ways to yer ain chamber—fast; and pray—gang na' near yer mither the night, unless ye'd hae anither taste o' this"—and he touched the whip. "Gang supperless to bed. 'This sort,' as our blessed Saviour said, 'comes na oot but by fasting and prayer.' Early the morn, you, Janet, the bauldest, the auldest, and the maist confirmed in iniquity, ye'll gang wi' me to bide awhile wi' yer aunt Grizzie Macauley—a woman fu' o' grace and piety. You, Alice, will bide under my ain eem. It'll gang hard wi' me, but I'll pourge ye baith o' a' this sin and shame. And noo gang and leave me to pray for strength to strive wi' the tempter, for yer sowls, and to retoorn thanks for the timely grace o' this unexpected discovery—

and do ye the same, or yer na dochters o' Macauley!"

When they were gone, the zealous but misguided father exchanged the assumed sternness and savage ferocity of his countenance and manner, for an expression and an attitude of deep grief and humility. Falling on his knees, the tears pouring down his cheeks, he cried aloud: "Father of mercy! let this atone; I have not suffered my own weak fondness, or their tender years and more tender frames, to save them from the reward of iniquity; but by my own anguish in the infliction, keener even than theirs, and by this sprinkling of their blood"—and he touched the thong of the whip, on which were two or three stains—"and which it tortured me more to see than my own heart's blood gushing forth, forgive the wretched children and the parent who must have been wanting, else this could not have been!"

In fervent ejaculations and earnest prayer, the fanatic remained fasting and cold after his tedious

journey, and might have been so found long after the poor girls had wept themselves to sleep in each other's arms.

Early the next morning, without allowing her more than one embrace of her poor mother, and that in his own presence, the terrible Macauley took Janet behind him on a pillion, and bore her about thirty miles, along wretched roads and moors, on a high trotting horse, and in the very teeth of a cutting easterly wind. Janet wept bitterly, but said nothing; she knew full well, complaint and entreaty were alike unavailing. She dreaded her stern Father and her strict Aunt; but what she felt most keenly, was the separation from her meek and suffering Mother, and the gentle sister whom she loved as those love, who have shared from the cradle the same seclusion, the same hardships, the few indulgences, and the many privations.

Mr. Ebenezer Macauley left his daughter in the kitchen of the lonely dwelling called the Mair House, while he went to his sister's sitting-

room in private, to explain to her the cause of his visit.

Maggie, a cross old spinster, with one eye, Miss Macauley's only attendant, received the Minister with a howl, meant to be a religious welcome, and scowled on the pretty Janet, as if beauty and sin must be one.

A lean chicken was roasting at the fire, for Miss Grizzie Macauley's dinner; and faint and famished from her long, cold, and painful excursion, Janet saw with dismay its mean proportions so sadly contrasted with its savoury steam.

“Na doot ye hae dined on the road?” growled Maggie.

“Oh na,” said Janet, “I assure you, my gude Maggie, neither my Faither nor mysel' hae touched food syne we left hame early the morn.”

“The warse luck for yersel' and for me then; I'm auld noo, ond I canna be fashed. Wha' for did na' the meneester send a bit letter to say

he wor for bringing ye ? then I'd had twa o' they bonnie birdies on the spit, and noo there's na' mair than the Meestress can eat, let alone a wee lavings for mysel'."

"Hae ye ony eggs, gude Maggie, and ony bacon, dear Maggie ?" said Janet. "If ye hae, I'll sune help ye to mak ready eno', and eno's as gude as a feast. Come, Maggie, we were aye gude friends ye ken, and ye'll na' let me bide hoongry the day, I'm sure."

Maggie did not remember any great friendship; indeed, her intercourse with Janet, whom she had not seen for years, had consisted of the mischievous pranks of a spirited hoyden on the one side, and the hard cuffs and sharp rebukes of a cross old maid on the other. But the pale cheeks and the imploring eyes of pretty Janet touched even her stern heart; and seeing her shiver with cold, she said : "There, sit ye down, sit ye down, lassie, in the ingle neuk, and mak ye warm ; and I'll fry ye a bonnie dish of eggs and bacon, and may be mak ye a pancake forbye. "But, oh

lassie, lassie!" she added, with a howl, "I wish I could see the dochter o' that sainted mon, that heavenly preacher, mair eager for the bread o' life than the meat that perisheth. I ken wha is yer God, lassie, and I grieve to ken it; but mak ye warm, and eat and be filled—and forget na' to ask a grace before meat, and to retoorn a blessing after."

Before Maggie had got the tempting repast quite ready, Janet was summoned to the presence of her aunt.

The prim spinster, a few years Macauley's senior, and somewhat past sixty, appeared, from the austerity of her very marked features and her defective eye-sight, considerably older. She was a very tall, huge, raw-boned woman, dressed a good deal like the most rigid Puritans of the days of the Commonwealth; but the white coif under which her silver hair was gathered, was a triumph of clear starching, as were the ample kerchief crossed over her bosom, and the apron which covered half her dress of sad-colored stuff; she wore a large

pair of black-rimmed spectacles, which resting on her very high cheek-bones, gave something ghastly to the expression of her very pale face. Her hearing, too, was much impaired ; indeed, the same severe attack of cold had affected both sight and hearing, and was caught a few years before, in her long walks, in the severest weather, every Sabbath evening, to the kirk, some miles across a bleak moor—and a cutting draft, which constantly blew upon her in the damp edifice, where no fire had ever been kindled, save that which warmed the breasts of a most zealous preacher and his devoted flock.

Mistress Grizzie Macauley spoke, as most deaf people do, in a stentorian voice ; and a pair of high heels added to her masculine height, and gave her a terrific and almost supernatural appearance.

Janet, who had not seen her for some time, felt her heart sink within her, and trembled as she dropped a curtsey to the gigantic being who came forth from her high-backed arm-chair to welcome

her. In spite of her aunt's loud voice and forbidding manner, Janet felt a little relieved, when she kindly extended a long bony hand, half encased in a black mitten, and said:—

“ Weelcome, Janet Macauley, weelcome to Muir Hoose; be na' scared, lassie; yer gude faither, my weel respectit brither, has mad me acquaint wi' the sad tale o' corruption ond o' bockslidin'; but he has na' spared the rod to spoil the child; ye are chastened, and ye are belived. Come back, then, to the true fauld—retoorn, ye prodigal, to your faither's heart and hearth!”

“ Your aunt is so kind as to allow you to remain here awhile,” said Macauley—“ here, where Vanity and Corruption never come, and where ye will hear naething but gude words—words in season—see naething but gude examples—and hae leisure to meditate and to repent!”

“ Yes, lassie!” said the aunt; “ if ye would sing, tune your voice to holy hymns; if ye would read, I've gude bukes eno' to content ye; if ye are nimble and fond o' exercise, ye'll hae twa

lang walks ilka Sabbath, by my pony's side, to the blessed kirk, across the moor, and the twa weekly meetings to tay and exhortation, at the hoose o' my friend and pastör, the Reverend Peter Mc. Growler. Then, if ye are, as I doot na', ready wi' yer needle and yer sheers, we've mony a pleasant task laid by, as needing younger een and limber fingers than mine or Maggie's. Ye'll hae the sma' dressing-room within my ain, that looks upon the bonnie kail garden, whilk opens to the muir; and I doot na', early hours and weel spent days, will send you sweet slumbers, and happy dreams o' grace. Sae weelcome ance mair to my hame, my brither's bairn! Kiss me, lassie, and kiss yer faither, and let a' bitterness between ye be forgotten. Ye hae sinned, ye hae been chastised, ye hae repentit, and noo let there be joy here, as there is in heaven over a sinner that repenteth."

Janet embraced her Aunt and her Father, who clasped her to his bosom and wept over her; and then her Aunt said: "And noo, lassie, gang

and help Maggie wi' the dinner, for I'm hoongry mysel', and ye weary wayfarers maun be half famished, I'm thinking."

Janet, who saw resistance was quite vain, determined to make the best of her situation, and keenly to watch for any opportunity of ameliorating it.

A very protracted grace preceded a dinner, to which her father did ample justice (for he had made it a point of conscience to fast till he had resigned Janet to her aunt); he then pronounced an equally elaborate thanksgiving, and favoured the little household with extempore prayers, and an extempore discourse. Once started, there was no knowing when and where he would stop, but the shades of evening closing in, reminded him he had yet some dying parishioner to visit near his own house; and so, mounting his horse, he rode off.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.







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